THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

SPECIAL EDUCATOR STRESS AND BURNOUT

by

© ROSALIA BRECHT

A THESIS

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Special Educator Stress and Burnout submitted by Rosalia Brecht in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education in School Psychology.

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Abstract

The focus of the study was the problem of teacher stress and burnout. One hundred six teachers were given the Maslach Burnout Inventory to determine the level of burnout in this high stress occupation. Differences in the range of experienced stress and burnout found among the sub-disciplines of the teaching profession support the contention that stress and burnout is a reality with special educators. The special educators reported experiencing a higher frequency of emotional exhaustion related to their teaching assignment on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI). The MBI, developed by Maslach and Jackson (1981), was used to measure stress and burnout on three scales: depersonalization, personal accomplishment, and emotional exhaustion. The findings indicate that special educators were: similar to the mainstream teachers, but dissimilar to their resource room colleagues in experiencing more frequent depersonalization; and dissimilar to both the mainstream and resource room teachers in experiencing a higher frequency of emotional exhaustion.

The study is compatible with the results of such studies as Cherkes and Fimian (1982), where stress was reported to be a factor contributing to special educator burnout. Their findings were that special education teachers experience stronger Emotional and Fatigue Manifestation than mainstream teachers who teach either nonhandicapped or both handicapped and nonhandicapped students.

Supporting these findings, the qualitative study incorporated a description of the experiences reported by special educators. These specialist teachers reported that role ambiguity, work overload, lack of appropriate materials, endless demands for individualized diagnosis and program development, extensive paperwork, unstimulating work environment, and inadequate time to establish meaningful inter-relationships were factors contributing to work-related stress. If special education is to retain a working professional complement the stress factors must be recognized. By identifying the factors contributing to stress symptoms, depletion of our valuable professional resources, experienced teachers, may be averted.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I INTEGRATIVE OVERVIEW 1
INTRODUCTION 1
Quantitative Study 1
Purpose of the Study 2
The Scope of the Study 3
Limitations and Assumptions 3
Research Design 4
Qualitative Study 5
Context of this Study 6
Purpose of the Study 8
Research Questions 9
Significance of the Study 10
Organization of the Study 10

II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE 12
Introduction 12
What is Stress? 16
Temporary and Chronic Stress 17
What is Burnout? 21
Factors Contributing to Stress and Burnout 25
Job-Related Sources of Stress 25
Locus of Control 31
Pupil Load 34
Job Satisfaction 35
Work Environment 39
Schedules and Stress 40
Rewards and Stress 41
Inter-Relationships as Stressors 41
Administrators 42
Colleagues 48
Students 50
Parents 54
Summary 55

III INSTRUMENTATION AND METHODOLOGY 57
Permission for the Study 57
Designing the Questionnaire 57
The Population and the Sample 59
Data Collection Techniques 60
Tabulation of the Data 60

IV THE QUALITATIVE STUDY 62
Orientation and Procedure 62
Initial Stage 64
The Researcher 64
Research Procedure 66
Participants 66
Establishing Rapport 66

Field Observation 67
Interviews and Conferences 68
Data Collection 68
Descriptive Portrayals 68
Validity 69
Interpretation 69

V DATA ANALYSIS..... 70
Introduction 70
Findings and Implications 70
Hypotheses I 71
Analysis 71
Conclusion 72
Hypothesis II 73
Analysis 73
Conclusion 74
Hypothesis III 74
Analysis 74
Conclusion 76
Hypothesis IV 76
Analysis 76
Conclusion 78
Hypothesis V 78
Analysis 78
Conclusion 79
Hypothesis VI 80
Ancillary Findings 82
Question 1 82
Question 2 83
Question 3 83
Question 4 84
Question 5 85
Summary of Findings 86

VI THEMES EMERGING FROM THE RELATED EXPERIENCES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS 87
Introduction 87
Early Experiences as a Teacher 87
Beginning Teaching 87
Experiencing Role Ambiguity and Lack of Direction.. 88
Experiencing Lack of Appropriate Materials..... 89
Experiencing Work Overload and High Expectations... 89
Experiencing Organizational Stress 90
Accommodating Individual Differences 91
Developing Classroom Management Skills 91
Teaching in Unstimulating Environmental Settings.. 92
Establishing Relationships 93
Experiencing Rewards 94
Experiences as Established Special Educators..... 95
Experiencing Role Related Stress 96
Experiencing Work Overload 97

Being Responsible for Students..... 99
Lacking Locus of Control 100
Meeting the Demands of High Pupil Load 101
Experiencing Job Satisfaction 102
Teaching in Unstimulating Environments 104
Meeting Schedules and Experiencing Stress..... 106
Experiencing Rewards and Stress 108
Inter-Relationships as Sources of Stress 109
Communicating with Administrators 109
Developing Policies 110
Experiencing Consultative Services 111
Experiencing Program Evaluation 112
Experiencing Staff Evaluation 112
Establishing Relationships with Colleagues..... 113
Teaching Students 115
Accommodating Parents 116

VII DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS 118
Integrative Overview 118
Discussion and Implications 119
Discussion of Results 119
Summary 120
Qualitative Summary and Reflections..... 121
Summary 122
Reflections on the Study 122
Topic 122
Investigative Strategy 123
Recommendations for Future Research 125
Implications for Intervention 127

REFERENCES 129

APPENDICES 135
Appendix A 135
Appendix B 137

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Description	Page
1	Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups	71
2	Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups	71
3	Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups	72
4	Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups	73
5	Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups	73
6	Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups	74
7	Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups	75
8	Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Groups	75
9	Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups	76
10	Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups	77
11	Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups	77
12	Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups	77
13	Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Three Teacher Groups	77
14	Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups	79
15	Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups	79
16	Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups	80

17 Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups 80

18 Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups 81

19 Number and Percentage of Male and Female Participants .. 82

20 Age Group and Category of Teaching Assignment 83

21 Number and Percentage in Various Teaching Assignments .. 83

22 Number and Percentage of Teaching Years in the Present Assignment 84

23 Number and Percentage of Years of Teaching Experience .. 85

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Description	Page
1	A Framework for Stress	19
2	The Relationship between Increasing Demands and the Performance of the Teacher's Tasks	27
3	Work Satisfaction vs Commitment Trends	36

CHAPTER 1

INTEGRATIVE OVERVIEW

This study is an investigation of the problem of teacher stress. The proposal that teacher stress and burnout is related to the teaching assignment is the central focus. In order to investigate these problems thoroughly, the researcher approached the study from a two-fold perspective in order to glean as much relevant information as possible. Both the quantitative and the qualitative research strategies are utilized in the study. In this chapter, the researcher presents the quantitative problem, purpose, scope, limitations and research design. The qualitative study follows with an introduction, context and purpose of the study, and research questions. Since the significance and the organization of the study have many factors in common these are integrated and unified at the end of the chapter.

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROBLEM

Quantitative Study

Only recently has the "teacher burnout" concept been critically examined at the Canadian level. While some literature exists comparing the effects of stress, emphasis has been on studies relating to topics such as sources of teacher stress (Bartell, 1984; Beasley & Serna, 1983; extent of teacher stress (Klas et al., 1983; Ruddy, 1984), and stress control (Gupta, 1981; Castell et al., 1984; and Hiebert, 1983). However, little research has been done to determine whether any particular category of teachers, especially special education teachers in self-contained settings, is more prone to stress and burnout. What

little literature exists comparing the stresses of elementary, junior high and specialist teachers has tended to lack a clear description of the latter group.

Over recent years stress and burnout in human services occupations has attracted considerable attention. However, comparatively little research is available concerning the level of stress as it affects teachers working in varying environmental settings with regard to the teaching assignment. Some insight has been gleaned from American literature. One study compared the intensity and frequency of stress among specialist teachers of Educable Mentally Handicapped, Learning Disabled, and Environmentally Deprived students and its relationship to the specific demographic variables such as grade level, category of the students, educational background, years of experience, age and sex (Johnson, et al., 1981). Another study (Presley, 1982) compared the levels of stress in special education teachers, assessed the scope of the burnout in this specific population, and compared the level of teacher burnout with respect to the teaching assignment within the sub-disciplines of this profession. Others (Johnson, Gold, Williams, and Fiscus, 1981) stated that "the problem of stress experienced by special educators as a result of requirements of Public Law 94-142 is an area where very little research and program intervention has been undertaken."

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate the extent to which the restrictiveness of the classroom setting contributes to teacher burnout. Does the intensity and frequency of teacher stress increase in direct

proportion to the degree of restrictiveness of the classroom setting, ie. the degree to which the teachers and students in these classes are aliented or segrated from mainstream education? Stated more simplistically, the study proposes that teacher stress and burnout is related to the teaching assignment and that special education teachers, in particular, experience more stress and burnout than their colleagues in other teaching positions. Based on the Maslach Burnout Inventory categories for stress assessment six hypotheses were postulated as follows: (1) educators categorized as Special Education teachers and placed in self-contained classroom teaching situations will report more frequent depersonalization than their colleagues; (2) educators categorized as Special Education teachers will report higher levels of depersonalization from their students than their colleagues; (3) educators categorized as Special Education teachers will more frequently report experiencing lower levels of personal accomplishment than their colleagues; (4) educators categorized as Special Education teachers will report experiencing lower levels of personal accomplishment with greater intensity than their colleagues; (5) educators categorized as self-contained Special Educators will report more frequent emotional exhaustion related to their teaching assignment than their colleagues; and (6) educators categorized as Special Education teachers of self-contained classess will report greater levels of stress intensity relating to emotional exhaustion than their colleagues.

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is an examination of the stress levels experienced by full-time classroom educators in three teaching assignments: (1) regular

classroom teahers in charge of students in the mainstream educational program; (2) resource room teachers responsible for the upgrading of specific skills of regular students placed in their care for short-term remediation; and, (3) self-contained teachers in charge of students who demonstrate a lag of two or more years in academic achievement when compared with peers in the regular mainstream programs. As of March 23, 1987 there were 106 teachers who met the criteria to be included in the population.

LIMITATIONS AND ASSUMPTIONS

The sample selected did not include the entire population of all the school districts and school divisions approached. Therefore, it was assumed that the selected categories of teachers were representative of the population, and that the number of respondents were also representative of the entire group of teachers.

It was further assumed that those who responded answered the questionaire truthfully and that these respondents, who subjectively evaluated themselves, did not in any way bias the results.

RESEARCH DESIGN

To measure the extent to which stress effects full-time teachers in the various teaching assignments, the MBI - Maslach Burnout Inventory - Human Services Survey was selected to measure the level of stress and burnout in this human services occupation.

The educators who met the criteria of being full-time classroom teachers were selected for participation in the study. Participants were provided with a questionnaire package which contained: (1) a cover letter to explain the purpose of the study, to encourage participation

in survey, and to provide specific instructions for the appropriate use of the computer data sheets; (2) an instruction and questionnnaire sheet developed to obtain demographic information and to assure absolute confidentiallity and anonymity; (3) the MBI - Maslach Burnout Inventory; and (4) the computer data sheet.

All questionnaires were distributed and collected by a locally appointed representative on behalf of the investigator. Teachers were informed that only the computer data sheet was required in the return envelope and that they could keep the questionnaire if they wished. A follow-up report of the means after the collection of the data was promised so that individuals could assess their own stress level.

Qualitative Study

The crucial time in a beginning special education teacher's life is the period when the young professional faces and becomes responsible for the management, organization, instruction, and evaluation of the pupils. It is a venture into unfamiliar ground, a perilous time of life-transition fraught with risks and emotional anxiety. Some teachers remember it as a time of anxiety, fear and trauma. Many educators concede that they were not entirely or adequately prepared for it.

Most of the literature on beginning educators is comprised of reports of neophyte and veteran teachers concerning their experiences. Data collected through observation of beginning special education teachers appears to be rather sparse. Occasionally, some teachers were required to recall their initial experiences in retrospect, reconstructed through the rose colored lenses of their recollected memories. "Many of the studies were 'one shot' inquiries" and much of

the data and research has been accumulated through such limited methodological practices or procedures (Everett-Turner, 1984, p. 1). Despite these weaknesses it became apparent that many themes related to stress recurred.

In contrast to the neophyte professionals are the experiences, joys, and frustrations of the veteran special education teacher similar to those of the beginning special educator, or do subtle changes occur that escape all but the most perceptive observer? Do these subtle changes affect the special eductor in such a way as to promote human dignity and well-being, or do negative stresses take their toll to cause excessive stress leading to erosion of dignity, self-concept, deterioration of health and well-being, and ultimately to burnout?

Context of this Study

What are the initial experiences and stresses of a special education teacher? What is it really like during those first days, first weeks and first months of the school year? How do our young special education teachers experience those initial few days and weeks? I have some faint memories of what it was like and I have listened to other teacher's shared recollections of their experiences. What is it that makes this period of one's life so special?

In comparison, what are the experiences like for the veteran special education teachers? Have their perceptions changed? Are the joys, rewards, and job-satisfactions what they were initially, or have they changed? Have these rewards and satisfactions been adequate or

have they been outstripped by frustrations, dissatisfactions, and excessive stresses?

In the literature there were a number of studies that utilized surveys and questionnaires, but they were unable to uncover the underlying meaning teachers gave to their experiences. If teachers stated that their job satisfaction was high or that they found their job to be an increasing source of dissatisfaction, it still left many questions unanswered. For example, what contributed to either job satisfaction or increasing dissatisfaction? Was job satisfaction a consequence of the rewarding experience of interacting with students, an opportunity to nuture their growth, a sense of control as one sees the impact of one's positive influence on students, or a combination of these factors? On the other hand, was it lack of a sense of accomplishment with students, declining student interaction due to increasing demands in other areas such as increasing paperwork, or bureaucratic interferences and pressures that contributed to decreasing job satisfaction? Evidently a questionnaire would not uncover these basic issues.

Although the researcher had read some literature and examined many surveys, she felt she still lacked an understanding of the joys and stresses of beginning special education teachers. As a veteran in the field of special education she began her own career as a regular mainstream teacher so she had never experienced what it was really like to be a novice special education teacher. Although she could not deny her own past experiences and influences, it did seem possible to be able to put that aside in an attempt to share the lived world of beginning

educators in order to come to a greater understanding of their experiences.

However, in an attempt to understand the varied experiences of her veteran colleagues the problem was more difficult. While the researcher could not eliminate her personal experiences, she was constantly aware that more personal effort was required to interpret their comments in an unbiased manner, in order to convey the meaning they gave to their experiences accurately.

In this study the researcher endeavored to utilize similar questions, strategies, and approaches in the collection of data from the beginning and experienced special education teachers. It was hoped that both the similarities and subtle differences would become evident as the investigation proceeded.

Purpose of this Study

The main purpose of this study was to portray the lived-experiences of neophyte and veteran teachers of special needs students. Although it was logically expected that each teacher's personal experiences would be unique to some degree because of personal traits and the unique qualities of each teaching assignment, the research emphasized the professionals' perceptions of the experiences encountered in their professional work life. The deeper meaning and insight of these novel experiences for these teachers in the field of special education was sought. The emphasis of this study was mainly concerned with the special education teachers' stresses stimulated by their work related school experiences.

Thus teachers beginning or pursuing their careers in special education shared their personal thoughts and experiences while the researcher attempted to understand, identify, and interpret the underlying meaning of the related experiences. As this researcher wished not only to gain a better understanding of what special education teachers are experiencing, but also to delve and reveal the meaning of such experiences, she decided to develop a study focusing on the daily experiences of a small number of special educators, employing various strategies utilized by previous researchers. This included ethnographic methods for appropriate collection of data regarding the lived-experiences of the special education teachers which resulted in descriptive portrayals of the observable world, as well as, a valiant attempt to uncover, probe, explore, penetrate, and reflect upon the underlying meaning that the teachers attributed to these experiences.

Research Questions

The most relevant research problem was "What are the stresses encountered by beginning and experienced special education teachers?" Additional questions were asked to initiate the investigative study. However, these were very broad in scope to allow and encourage recollection and disclosure of matters of individual significance to these young professionals.

Following the initial interviews the teachers were asked to write comments or anecdotal notes of their experiences as they occurred or as they thought of them during the period between the first and second interview with the researcher. These comments and thoughts about their lived experiences were the basis for further exploration and depth in

the next interview. As an observer and team teaching colleague, the researcher recorded ongoing activities, teacher and student comments and actions, noting and suggesting topics and issues to discuss and probe later. After several individual sessions of constant questioning, commenting, and discussing certain themes began to develop based on these related experiences.

The second focus of this study was the challenge of making sense of what the teachers revealed about their lived experiences. This sometimes required recalling rather trivial comments and experiences that had occurred in the early stages of the study, and cooperatively probing for the deeper meaning to understand how it was related to more recent feelings and concerns. As themes emerged the researcher explored, interpreted and reviewed these themes with the teachers to be sure her perceptions were accurate.

Significance of the Study

The intent was to contribute to existing knowledge related to teachers stress and burnout. Crane and Iwanicki (1983), stated that these concerns need to be addressed in future studies and investigations. They recommended

> "an in-depth study of the interaction between the special educator's personal and professional needs is desirable in order to determine significant sources of stress. Opportunities are available to identify professional needs by observing teachers as they act, interact, and react with students, colleagues and parents. With volunteer teachers, procedures could be developed to assess their personal needs. By analyzing the interaction between the professional and personal needs of special education teachers, sources of stress could be identified" (p. 17).

McIntyre (1982), also suggested that future research should contribute to the findings and recommendations of his and other studies. He suggested "qualitative and quantitative methodologies are both indicated, and an investigation into actual versus perceived burnout might be undertaken" (p. 16).

Organization of the Study

The first chapter specifies the context in which this study was directed and carried out. Chapter Two is a review of the literature dealing with the experiences of special education teachers and the stresses relating to this specialized category of the teaching profession. Chapter Three explains the quantitative procedure employed. Chapter Four shows that qualitative research can be employed to probe, explore, and obtain an understanding of the underlying meaning of these teachers' experiences. Chapter Five contains informative data based on the questionnaires returned by the sample of teachers. Chapter Six contains information related to these teachers experiences and perceptions and develops the emerging themes with the participants in an attempt to understand these human experiences. Chapter Seven is a summary of reflections and conclusions concerning the study, and therein is stated the implications for special education teachers, administrators, and the educational systems in which they must work.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Only recently has the concept of stress been critically examined in the educational field. Studies have been done dealing with topics such as sources of teacher stress (Gupta, 1981, Bartell, 1984), extent of teacher stress (Farber, 1982, Klas et.al., 1983), and stress control (Casteel & Matthews, 1984), but relatively few research studies have been done (Welch, 1983) to determine whether any particular category of teachers, especially special education teachers, experience higher levels than their experienced veteran colleagues or their counterparts in regular or mainstream assignments. Although the literature which represents a concentration upon teacher stress and burnout has increased somewhat, much of the literature has been of a fairly conjectural nature. Specific research centering on stress and burnout of special educators has been extremely scant although some work was initiated by Maslach and Jackson (1979) which dealt with burnout in the helping professions. One study compared the intensity and frequency of stress among specialist teachers of Educable Mentally Handicapped, Learning Disabled, and Environmentally Disadvantaged students and its relationship to the specific demographic variables such as grade level, category of the students, educational background, years of experience, age and sex (Johnson et.al., 1981). Another study (Presley, 1982) determined the existence of stress and burnout in all special education teachers, assessed the scope of the stress in this specific population, and compared the level of teacher stress and burnout with respect to the

teaching assignment within this specialized area.

Beasley and Serna (1983) suggested that special educators had "even more potential for stress and burnout because of their multi-faceted roles with parents, support personnel, and children experiencing learning problems" (p. 3). Yet relatively little is known about how stress affects the beginning special education teachers in their life transition and new role as professionals in the field of special education. In a significant study in the U.S.A., Hill and Parker (1983), lament the high special education teacher attrition and report that "annual turnover rates for special education have been estimated to be as high as between 30 to 50% with several states reporting almost complete turnover occurring every three years" (NRP, 1979). Schrag (1978) reported similar findings and "indicated that during the period 1968 to 1976 on the average 46% of the entire special education teaching force left...after only two years of teaching." Others (Johnson, Gold, Williams & Fiscus, 1981) stated that problems related to "stress experienced by special educators as a result of requirements of Public Law 94-142 is an area where very little research and program intervention has been undertaken" (p. 4).

For special educators

> "stress is apparent for many reasons. In their role, special educators serve a varied and challenging clientele. Daily classroom situations may vary in more profound ways than in regular classrooms in emotional intensity and quality. In addition to these factors, tensions are brought about by changes in the delivery services as mandated by recent state and federal legislation" (Crane & Iwanicki, 1983, p. 3).

Following the implementation of Public Law 94-142, the Rehabilitation and Education of All Handicapped Children Act, passed in 1975, the scope and structure of special education has undergone drastic changes. For special educators, stress due to lack of support services, increased demand for development and delivery of individualized educational plans and excessive time demands for increased regulatory paperwork have increased the responsibilities and expanded the roles of special educators. Excessive time required for mandated instructional planning and programming may contribute to increased stress and eventual burnout (Crane & Iwanicki, 1983). Although implementation of the Rehabilitation and Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L. 94-142) has caused considerable unprecedented pressure for special educators,

> "Fimian's (1980) research indicates that incidence of stress or burnout may not be as high or intense as others have claimed (Block, 1980; McGuire, 1979; Weiskop, 1980), he still found 46% of special education teachers reporting their profession to be a great to very great source of stress. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1979), wrote of finding 30.7% of their sample of special educators in England rating being a teacher as being very stressful or extremely stressful...and considering the problems of comparing teaching in two different cultures, it appears as if a large number of special educators view their profession as being highly stressful" (McIntyre, 1983, p. 4).

Cooper (1980), stated that studies done by regional centers for the deaf-blind found that a teacher of the deaf-blind generally worked for three years, then left the educational field completely. Hunter (1977) included teaching as one of the most stressful occupations. According to 1938 survey data, 37.5% of nationwide samples of teachers showed they were seriously worried or nervous (NEA,1938) "while stress plagued 78%

of the teachers surveyed more recently by NEA" (Coates & Thorensen, 1976).

In 1981 a survey by the NEA (Status of the American Public School Teacher, 1980-1981)

> "found that 36 percent of U.S. teachers would not choose teaching again as a career, and only 22 percent would definitely choose teaching again. A recent survey of public school teachers in New York State conducted by The New York Times (Fiske, 1982) stated that 47 percent of the respondents would go into another profession if they would do it all over again."

Coates and Thorensen (1976), noted that teaching was perceived as being very stressful by numerous practitioners. These researchers reviewed studies which reported:

> ...17% of 600 teachers were "unusually nervous" and 11% had suffered nervous breakdowns (Hicks,1933)
> ...33% of 110 female teachers displayed nervous symptoms (Peck,1933)
> ...37.5% of 5 150 teachers were seriously worried and nervous (Department of Classroom Teachers of the National Education Association, 1938)
> ...10% of teacher absences which exceeded 10 days were due to "nervous conditions" (Randall, 1951)
> ...43% of 2 200 teachers reported working under considerable strain and tension(National Education Association, 1951)
> ...16.2% of 2 290 responded that they were working under considerable strain, with 61.7% working under moderate strain" (National Education Association, 1976).

These statistics become even more alarming when reports state that teachers rank third in burnout frequency and intensity. The only jobs that surpass teaching in stress and burnout are traffic controllers and physicians (Lynch, 1981).

What is Stress?

According to Hans Selye, a leading authority in this area, stress is defined as the "nonspecific response of the body to any demand" (1974). Selye perceived the stress concept as an adaptation syndrome which segregates stress into the three stages of the alarm reaction, the resistance stage, and exhaustion.

The alarm reactions, associated with human emotions, initiate bodily changes at the sympathetic division level, increases heart beat and blood pressure and thus distributes increased blood to the exterior musculature. In contrast, the parasympathetic division monitors the day-to-day functioning of the organs. When emotional reaction occurs the sympathetic division overpowers the parasympathetic division and produces an array of bodily symptoms which prepares the body to react or to respond to the stressful situation. The response generally prepares the body for self-defense for the fight or flight response.

When the sympathetic system overpowers the para- sympathetic system, the adrenal glands secrete too large a supply of epinephrine (adrenalin) and norepinephrine directly into the blood supply. The adrenalin releases too much blood sugar thus supplying the muscles and the brain with more energy. This stimulates the heart and causes it to beat faster. Norepinephrine constricts the peripheral blood vessels leading to the extremities and in this way raises the blood pressure.

If much long term stress has been experienced the individual proceeds to the stage of resistance. Initially the person recovers from the original emotional upset, and endurance of the situation is attempted. This places extremely high demand and strain on the

organism's physical and psychological resources. As stress continues at an overwhelming level, the person unable to cope becomes thoroughly exhausted. In the exhaustion stage, all the internal resources of stress management have been depleted, and as the individual tries to manage unresolved stresses the continual depletion of the physical and psychological resources results in burnout.

Temporary and Chronic Stress

Stress can: (1) have detrimental effects on our physical and mental health, (2) impair our effectiveness from a professional perspective, and (3) depreciate satisfaction derived from our work and its related activities. Although a certain amount of stress is inevitable and not always detrimental, it is essential that we find our optimal stress level. Minimal or temporary stress may result in boredom leading to stagnation, but excessive or long term stress may cause distress. Distress occurs when the environmental demands exerted on the individual exceed the capacity or resources of the person to manage them.

Therefore, the nature of the stress, temporary or transitory as opposed to long term stress is a factor that must also be considered. Temporary stress is a briefly elicited response to stress while chronic stress is a long term, continual or enduring state. Temporary stressors have little negative effect and pose a negligible health hazard while chronic stress frequently elicits or simply sustains the stress response for a prolonged period of time (Selye, 1974).

Unfortunately, this level of stress has debilitating functional effects at the cognitive as well as the physical level and can result in

major health problems including gastrointestinal, cardiovascular and cerebrovascular disorders, cancer, and nervous disorders with related symptoms of irritability, hostility, aggression, depression, anxiety, blurred vision, rapid speech, overeating and inability to concentrate, plus an array of minor physical maladies such as skin disorders, chronic muscle tensions, insomnia, frequent colds, flu and respiratory illness, headaches, lower back pain, dizziness and diarrhea. In addition, an individual may portray extreme fatigue and apathy, feel overcome by a strong sense of powerlessness, hopelessness or entrapment, and demonstrate a tendency to be accident prone (Scaros 1981; Kahn, 1981; Katz & Kahn, 1978).

In a study (Pettegrew and Wolf, 1982) stated that stress is "increasingly becoming a recognized occupational hazard of the teaching profession" (Ray, 1985, p. 3). According to Moracco and McFadden (1982), teachers are reporting increasing degrees and levels of stress. Hunter (1977) indicated that teaching is being recognized as one of the top three most stressful occupations. Similarly, Lynch (1981) reported that the teaching profession ranked third in work-induced stress and burnout intensity.

According to a study prepared by New York teacher specialists at the Teacher Center Sites and reported by Scaros (1981), distress has numerous plausible causes:

Figure 1 has been removed due to unavailability of copyright permission.

Figure 1 A Framework for Stress (Hiebert, 1984)

> "Poor quality relationships with students, colleagues, and/or administrators. This includes poor communication and a lack of mutual respect. Also, it is not uncommon to feel overwhelmed by too many interactions in too short a time.
>
> A sense of powerlessness. It is particularly stressful to feel responsibility for whatever occurs, but perceive that you have little control over the outcome.
>
> Role conflict. Sometimes we feel pulled in different directions by the expectations of the community, students, administrators, and our personal philosophy of education.
>
> Life changes external to work situation. For example, events such as the death of a loved one, divorce, moving, etc., may diminish the energy and emotional strength that we bring to our work.
>
> Life stages. Adults continue to experience predictable life stages (passages) that decrease our capacity to deal with the emotional demands of teaching.
>
> Internal sources of stress. Our ideas, expectations, and attitudes may cause us to experience stress in a situation that is not stressful to others.
>
> Institutional practices and policies that foster competition and evaluation, and create situations that are likely to be stressful.
>
> A loss of purpose or meaning in life.
>
> Time management problems. A feeling of constant time pressures and constraints" (Scaros, 1981, p. 6).

Researchers have concluded that educators under great stress were more fatiqued, ill more often and required longer periods of convalescence than teachers reporting less stress (Weiskopf, 1980). In addition, educators under much stress demonstrated

> "an alteration of psychological homeostatis resulting from aspects of the teacher's job that are perceived as threats to the individual's well-being or self-esteem" (Moracco and Mc Fadden, 1982, p. 549)

Furthermore, stressed teachers were noted to distance themselves emotionally as well as physically from their students as a result of long term, chronic stress.

It was observed that when stress reached a chronic level it contributed to a condition referred to as job burnout (Cherniss, 1980; Edelweiss, 1980; Maslach, 1976). Freudenberger (1977) described burnout as exhaustion, excessive demands on an individual's energy, strength and resources. Schab (1983) suggested that exhaustion was the key distinguishing feature of burnout while Bardo (1979) included symptoms of high absenteeism, low self-esteem, desire for vacations and lack of commitment. Another researcher, Weiskopf (1980) stated that as the effects progress, fatigue, lack of energy, illness, depression and feeling of boredom result. Frustration, helplessness, hopelessness and lack of energy follow (Bardo, 1979). If intervention does not occur the individual may withdraw from social activities and interpersonal contacts.

So, at the more advanced stages, burnout has been associated with alcohol, drug abuse, marital problems, and depreciation of both health and psychological problems (Schab & Iwanicki, 1982; Edelwich, 1980; Weiskopf, 1980). Obviously, stress and burnout have critical implications from both the personal and the educational perspective.

What is Burnout?

Although there are various scientific and popular definitions and explanations of burnout, the majority conceptualize the idea that burnout is a response to and consequence of stress encountered on the

job. Persons in the helping professions which are people-oriented tend to be more prone to this syndrome than persons in different occupations.

In Potter's (1980) opinion, "burnout is neither a physical ailment nor a neurosis" even though the condition has physiological and psychological characteristics. According to Potter, an individual affected by burnout loses the desire and capacity to initiate and participate in interests and capabilities. Freundenberger and Richelson (1980) perceive the individual with burnout as someone who has depleted both physical and mental resources in an effort to reach some unattainable, idealistic goal. Some sources, (Pines et al., 1981), state three characteristics of burnout: physical exhaustion with resultant low energy, excessive fatigue, and weakness; emotional exhaustion with related feelings of depression, haplessness, hopelessness and entrapment; and mental exhaustion portrayed by negative feelings toward self, work and life. In addition to these symptoms, Maslach and Jackson (1980) added reduced personal efficiency and accomplishments and depersonalization.

Others (Farber, 1983; Edelwich and Brodsky, 1980) perceived burnout as a slow, continuous erosion of the person's self-esteem, and physical and mental reserve. Rarely does the syndrome begin with major symptoms. Generally, the initial signs are minor but, if not heeded, develop into symptoms of major proportion that can not be ignored. Once people are thoroughly disillusioned and have experienced a situation of continual frustration, burnout begins to perpetuate itself inducing cynicism, with consequent negative attitudes, emotional exhaustion, apathy, and loss of energy, vitality and enthusiasm. Hence, burnout can be perceived as a

function of the stresses caused or produced by individual, work related and cultural factors. The final stage in a sequence of unsuccessful efforts to cope with numerous negative stressors is burnout. Edelwich and Brodsky state that the individual passes through the predictable stages of enthusiasm, stagnation, frustration, and apathy as a consequence of conditions at work. Scaros (1981), defined burnout as a "progressive loss of idealism, energy and purpose as a result of too much stress." She delineated the four stages leading to burnout:

Stage One - Enthusiasm

> At this stage we experience high hopes, high energy and enthusiasm about our jobs. Often in our enthusiasm we set unrealistic goals.

Stage Two - Stagnation

> Here, the job has become less exciting. We are still involved, but begin to seek enjoyment and fulfillment from sources other than the job.

Stage Three - Frustration

> At stage three, symptoms of distress begin to emerge. We begin to question our effectiveness and the value of the job itself.
> Here are some frustrations and stresses which can lead to burnout:
>
> Not enough money
> Too many hours
> Career dead-end
> Too much paper work
> Not appreciated by students
> Not appreciated by supervisors
> No support
> Powerlessness

Stage Four - Apathy

> If no intervention occurs, we reach this level as a defense against frustration. A job is a job is a job. Punch in. Punch out. What's the use? (New York City Teacher Centers Consortiuim, 1981, p. 4).

In order to reduce or possibly eliminate factors contributing to burnout, there must be an intervention system implemented to interrupt the self perpetuation of this cycle. Ianni and Reuss-Ianni (1983), believe burnout is a distinct syndrome with specific key characteristics. First, it is a condition with contemporary roots in Western culture. This idea doesn't eliminate the possibility that it has always existed and has only recently been recognized, but rather indicates that it appears to be related in some respect to modern society. Second, it is specifically related to the workplace. When noticed, the initial symptoms are almost always indicators of negative responses to the job and work dissatisfaction. Burnout seems to occur in those situations where work related or work role stresses experienced are internalized, leading to loss of self-esteem or somatization of symptoms.

Researchers contend that the symptoms of burnout include attitudinal, emotional, and physical dimensions. The distinctive quality and pattern of symptoms, attitudes, and behaviors is unique to each specific situation. Nevertheless, burnout appears to produce common end results including lowered efficiency, psychosomatic illnesses, loss of vitality, interest and confidence, cynicism, rigidity with respect to regulations, extreme detachment from others, and occasionally a specific incident of unusual conduct for that particular person. Burnout occurs on a continuum and the individual proceeds through a series of warning stages before progressing to the final stage of burnout. Due to the predictable development of burnout, detection of this syndrome would be beneficial to employees and employers alike.

Early recognition enables the individuals in the workplace to take innovative steps to implement appropriate strategies to prevent burnout from proceeding to the final stages.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO STRESS AND BURNOUT

Any specific incidence of stress is difficult to determine as stress may come from any sources and may be unique in all cases. Factors that cause stress are referred to as stressors, and generally comprise the large categories of: (1) environmental sources which refers to the general community including parents, clients and other factors outside the physical environment of the work place, (2) organizational stressors which comprise conditions of the work place such as the school, the specific job, and the characteristics of the supervisors and colleagues, and (3) individual stressors which encompass the unique experiences of the individual and include such factors as family responsibility, personality, skills, age, and health.

The emphasis of this study was on teacher responses that were stimulated by their work related experiences. For these reasons emphasis was placed on the organizational stressors even though other sources of stress for teachers may be stimulated by environmental or individual factors.

Job-Related Sources of Stress

Burnout is perceived as a reaction to chronic, job-related stress (Cherniss, 1983; Edelwich, 1980; Freudenberger, 1974; Maslach, 1976). Job specific stressors that have been pinpointed by researchers in the area include role conflict, role ambiguity, work overload and demand for

successful performances, responsibility for people, repetitiveness, locus of control, pupil load and general dissatisfaction, work environment, schedules and rewards. (Beasley et al., 1983; Harris et al., 1984, Bensky et al., 1980; Gupta, 1981).

Role conflict has been identified as the most frequently occurring stress factor. Conflicting demands from various administrators, or sometimes even the same individual about expectations can place a teacher in an impossible situation. "For instance, school administrators often expect teachers to run their classes quietly; they often also want teachers to encourage active participation of students" (Gupta, 1981, p. 4). Not too infrequently parental expectations of the teacher's role differ from administrators' expectations. Bossing and Ruoff (1982), found that seventy-five percent of the teachers indicated that they felt pulled in various directions by the demands of students, administrators and the public. Unable to resolve the inconsistencies of these numerous and varied demands, the teacher in such uncompromising situations may suffer considerable stress and anxiety. The high cost to educators of attempting 'to be all things to all people' may induce high levels of guilt, frustration and tension (Sparks, 1979).

Role ambiguity or unclearly defined job expectations directly contribute to much stress on the job. Beginning special education teachers may not know whether to place emphasis on academic skills development or on vocational life skills development. They are often in a quandary for weeks before a supervisor arrives to provide some direction and assurance.

Two studies (Schab and Iwanicki, 1982; Crane, 1981), focused on the effects of role conflict, a concurrence of inconsistent role expectations, and role ambiguity, unclearly specified rights, responsibilities and duties of teachers. Both studies reported that teachers in educational systems with highly ambiguous and conflicting role expectancies, experienced more intense and more frequent negative feelings and emotional exhaustion.

Shaw (1979) also concluded that the primary stressor experienced by special education teachers was lack of role clarity. Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1977) also identified role conflict and role ambiguity as one of the major stressors for special educators. However, Ratt (1978) pinpointed another factor he termed work overload. He defined role overload as work that is either "too difficult or too great in volume, relative to the individual's perceived capacity" (p. 3).

Figure 2 has been removed due to the unavailability of copyright permission.

Figure 2 The relationship between increasing demands and the performance of the teacher's tasks (Dunham, 1982)

Work overload was one of the most severe stressors. The teachers felt that they had too much work to do in the time available to them. Alternatives were: (1) accomplishing all work at a mediocre level; (2) accomplishing only some of the work well and leaving other areas undone; (3) telling or admitting to supervisors that they simply could not accomplish everything expected of them or (4) working incessantly and wearing or burning out (Gupta, 1981).

The majority of teachers attempted the latter with serious effects on health. Special education teachers, in particular, with additional requirements for development, implementation and integration of Individualized Education Plans, placement decisions and parent conferences, were overwhelmed by the endless demand on the individuals' coping abilities. If demands are too taxing highly motivated teachers react to the pressures by overworking. This can lead to worn out or burned out teachers. Farber (1982) contended that more teachers were worn out rather than burned out. The teachers were turned off by the job and stopped attempting to succeed in situations that appeared hopeless. Distinction between worn out and burned out was postulated by Fischer (1983) who observed "those who are burned out rather than worn out, cling tenaciously to a high sense of self-esteem" (p. 42) while individuals "who are portrayed as wornout have incurred damage to self esteem" (Farber, 1983, p. 42).

Block (1977) compared the symptoms of prolonged stress to the trauma of war veterans. Individuals experiencing burnout were generally functioning far below their potential and suffered pain, anxiety, stress and frustration in both career and non career related responsibilities or activities. "His survey found that teachers who are obsessional, passionate, idealistic, and dedicated (as measured on the Minnesota, Multiphasic Personality Inventory) are more prone to the battered teacher syndrome" (Gold, 1985, p. 272).

Similarly, Freudenberger (1983), noted that "the high achiever, the perfectionist, the one who needs to strive harder, is overly dedicated and committed; cannot say no, is competitive and always seeks to do more than he or she could possibly accomplish, is the one personality type who is prone toward burnout" Gold, 1985, p. 273).

Responsibility for other people can be particularly stressful if administrators or parents have unrealistic expectations for academic growth of all students. Some students with certain neuropsychological problems may not be able to retain gains due to the severity of their health problems. Beginning special education teachers may be unrealistic about how much they expect to accomplish with some of their special needs students. This uncertainty would make them particularly vulnerable to an administrator's over reaction to incidences of parental criticism. This may cause unwarranted stress. "In many ways, special education teachers were made to believe that if they were not all things to all people, then they are not doing a good job as teachers" (Hill & Parker, 1983,p.6).

In related research, Foster (1980), concluded that educators of severely and profoundly handicapped students experience frequent stress due to their professional duties and responsibilities. However, according to Johnson, et al. (1981), special educators of students classified as mentally handicapped -- a category which includes the educable mentally handicapped, the emotionally disturbed, and the learning disabled -- were reported to be heavily involved with significant changes in their role expectations since the implementation of Public Law 94-142. Role descriptions now demand extensive assessment, diagnosis, placement decisions, development, implementation and monitoring of individualized education programs, consultation, involved files and related paperwork. Bensky, et al. (1980) concluded that the result of such heavy demands placed the special educators of this mildly handicapped category of students under greater stress than teachers of severely and profoundly handicapped pupils.

> "Despite the possible existence of debilitating emotional and physical stress among teachers of the mildly handicapped (Weiskopf, 1980), there has been a surprising lack of research related directly to how such stress might lead to subsequent burnout" (Johnson, et al., 1981, p. 3).

Repetitiveness without breaks or changes, work at low, unstimulating levels, repetition of some material over and over for many periods, days or weeks can exert enormous pressure on the teacher. Workers in assembly lines often drank during lunch and stated that it was a coping strategy to handle the boredom of their work. "To some extent, a teacher's job is also boring" (Gupta, 1981, p. 9). Specialist teachers, for example, often teach the same thing over and over again,

several times a day. The continuous repetition of the same subject matter can make a teacher incredibly bored, and one teacher stated that "he would move to another job as soon as the opportunity arose" (Gupta, 1981, p. 9). Special education teachers must deal with low, unstimulating levels and constant repetition of material. For example, one educator remembers teaching a dependent handicapped individual to tie shoe laces. It took a period of eight months, a total of 1,137 trials, and then the teaching was rendered obsolete by velcro fasteners.

Locus of Control

The locus of control concept, which is based on a Social Learning Theory (Rotter, 1954), attempts to explain how an individual perceives a causal relationship existing between personal actions and the resultant consequences of this behavior. Stated more simplistically, it is the degree to which one perceives control over various aspects of one's personal affairs. The person's perceived degree of control ranges on a continuum from strong acceptance of external factors determining the outcome of life situations to strong belief in internal locus of control. A person demonstrating an internal locus of control views reinforcement as determined by personal behavior or characteristics while a person with an external locus of control views the consequences as being non contingent upon personal behavior and attributes such consequences to change, fate, luck, powerful or complex environmental forces and influential or controlling others. Since an individual is not entirely internal or external in orientation it is more accurate to view a particular person as having a tendency toward an internal or

external perception of their influence on the causality and consequences of their life events (McIntyre, 1983).

Numerous personal factors are assumed to be related to how an individual reacts to stressors. Perception of individual control over the stressor is an important factor. If the person feels that he/she has personal control and perceives that he/she is in charge of the situation, stress is minimal. "However, if the individual feels helpless and unable to handle the situation, the resulting stress will be severe" (Harris, et al., 1984). For example, McIntyre (1983, p. 19) stated that when compared with internals, "individuals with a more external orientation might report more debilitating anxiety, more neurotic symptoms, and more self-punitiveness in response to frustration" (Altrocchi, et al., 1968; Butterfield, 1964; Efran, 1963; Feather 1968; Goss & Morisko, 1970; Hountras & Scharf, 1970; Platt & Eisenman, 1968; Rotter, 1966; Tolar & Resnikoff, 1967; Watson, 1967). In studies based on teacher locus of control it was noted that:

> "when an event which is related to a teacher's profession and which follows some action by the teacher, is perceived by that teacher as not contingent upon his/her actions, but is perceived as due to luck, chance, fate, as under the control of powerful others, or as the result of complex, unpredictable forces, then this is labeled a belief in external control. On the other hand, if the teacher perceives that an event related to his/her teaching profession is contingent upon his/her own behavior, this is labeled a belief in internal control (Hall, et al., 1980, p. 2).

McIntyre (1981), assessed the teacher locus of control with the Norwicki-Strictland Adult Scale for Locus of Control(1973), and found that it correlated significantly with various factors of burnout when measured by and compared with the MBI.

> "As score of locus of control increased, indicating a more external life orientation, special education teachers reported more frequent and intense feelings of emotional exhaustion, stronger feelings of depersonalization toward students, and less frequent feelings of personal accomplishment. A near-significant negative correlation (.053) was also mentioned for strength of personal accomplishment. Thus it appears that as teachers reported less control over their lives, they also reported a greater degree of burnout" (p.19).

Similar findings were reported by Kyriacou and Sutcliffe (1979) who noted that teachers reporting higher levels of job related stress also indicated a more external orientation. Futhermore, Meadow (1981), concluded that individuals who felt that they had a more personal control within the workplace also experienced less emotional exhaustion, lower levels of depersonalization and an increased sense of self-esteem and personal accomplishment. Unfortunately, job-related stress escalates when commitment to one's work is high but feelings of control in the work situation are limited. Bossing and Ruoff (1982) reported

> "Eighty-nine percent of the sampled teachers perceived that they were very much personally involved in their work, and sixty-four percent reported that their job provided them with good feelings. However, feelings of powerlessness were also high: Seventy percent of the respondents felt trapped in their jobs, and ninety-one percent said that they had little or no influence in the curriculum or policy decisions in their school" (p. 21).

When administrative styles permit the teachers to develop goals and implement strategies to achieve these goals, expectations are generally realistic. Allowing input provides a staff with the opportunity to incorporate the goals of the system and to set personal goals to attain these goals. In addition to development and refinement of these goals, employees perceive some input and control over their future work related

activities when they are allowed to contribute to the decision-making process. Lack of input and control in policy decisions correlates highly with burnout (Fielding & Gall, 1982).

Pupil Load

In the Maslach and Pines (1978) study of mental health workers, it was observed that the more the case load of workers increased:

> "the more the staff members disliked their jobs; tried to separate their jobs from their personal life; wanted to change jobs; limited after-hours involvement with their clients; and the more staff members were concerned with working conditions rather than self fulfillments and socialization on the job. They predicted that as caseload increases, perceptions of burnout would increase" (McIntyre, 1982, p. 11).

In related research with teachers, Cherniss, et al. (1976) noted that educators, social workers, and lawyers with heavy caseloads had less positive opinions of their work life. Zabel and Zabel (1981) also reported that teachers with heavy pupil loads ranked the highest in emotional exhaustion but found other variables including a team teacher, an aide, or special education colleagues in the same school were not significant variables. Similarly, Bensky, et al. (1980) conducted a study involving special educators and observed that pupil load was the chief cause of job related stress. In fact, pupil load was

> "ranked as the most stressful job factor by self-contained classroom teachers, while resource room teachers ranked it as the second most stressful factor confronting them on their jobs. From the results of Bensky, et al. then, it would appear as if student load is less a factor in burnout among resource room teachers than it is among self-contained teachers" (McIntyre, 1982, p. 12).

Thus investigators concluded that increased client or student load was a significant contributory factor in both stress and burnout, and job dissatisfaction.

Job Dissatisfaction

Evidence of teacher burnout symptoms often causes hasty conclusions that teachers' commitment to their profession wanes as they age. Study in a number of professional fields indicates that professionals vary in the degree of their devotion or commitment to their work as they pass through various stages of life.

Underlying this concept of work commitment is an individual's motivation to perform. A study by Kuhlen (1968) indicated that an individual's personal interests, motivation to work and leisure activities change over the years and are influenced by sex, age, and normal life changes of marital status, parenthood, homeownership, and club or church membership.

Larsen (1976) studied ten professions and noted that individuals in the 30-45 year category reported more dissatisfaction with their jobs than other age groups. New employees begin their professions with great enthusiasm and derive high satisfaction in the early stages of their careers. Older workers also expressed greater satisfaction with their work than their colleagues in the middle age group. Other researchers (Anderson, 1975; Larsen, 1976: Newman, 1979), reported similar findings indicating that older teachers derived greater job satisfaction than did their youngest colleagues.

Newman's subjects reported changes in the levels of satisfaction they derived from their careers at different points in time. These subjects reported their perceptions of their work lives and the degree of satisfaction plotted a wavelike path similar to the hypothesized curve in Figure 3. Based on the research findings, it became apparent that "conflicting high commitment to the profession with low derived satisfaction from that profession at mid-life is indeed a normal, developmental and probably predictable stage in adult development" (Cardinell, 1981).

Figure 3 has been removed due to the unavailability of copyright permission.

Figure 3 Work Satisfaction vs Commitment Trends (Cardinell, 1981)

Cardinell (1981) developed trend lines to depict the frustration the worker experiences as his commitment to his work outstrips the satisfaction he derives from it. The specific individual, professional, social, physical and family variables may interact and exert excessive demands on the person until a point occurs when coping

> "with the conflict between work satisfaction and commitment reaches a crisis stage. Our profession has been preoccupied with appropriate coping of people rather than the crises precipitating it" (Cardinell, 1981, p. 9).

Despite the fact that job dissatisfaction and burnout are purportedly different constructs, research has indicated a connection between teacher satisfaction of needs and burnout. The connection between lack of needs fulfillment and burnout has been studied by Anderson (1980) and Sweeney (1981). They based their study on the theory developed by Abraham Maslow (1943), which stated that satisfaction of basic personal needs are a prerequisite to the self fulfillment of one's highest potential, a higher order need termed self actualization. The researchers observed that educators experiencing burnout also portrayed more needs deficiencies in the categories of esteem and self-actualization. Furthermore, they discovered that the social needs of teachers in the Junior High Schools were met to a lesser degree than colleagues at the elementary and highschool level while esteem and self-actualization needs of teachers were met to a greater degree at the elementary level. In addition, when relating esteem and self- actualization to job satisfaction, the researchers concluded that the special educators of low ability groups reported greater deficiencies in these areas when compared with teachers of average or superior ability, indicating less fulfillment of their personal needs.

Wangberg (1984) noted that teachers were acutely concerned with the issue regarding job satisfaction. Although some satisfaction was expressed by a few, the majority of comments expressed discontent and extensive dissatisfaction. Most comments were concerned with working

conditions, increased demand for paperwork and the status of teachers. In addition, findings indicated females presently expressed significant job dissatisfaction. Surprisingly, this dissatisfaction was not related to years of work experience. Dissatisfaction with teaching was widespread including all age levels.

Lortie's (1975) study reported that educators were generally intrinsically job oriented and obtained work satisfaction from positive or successful contact with pupils. It is possible that decreased satisfying contacts may be the result of external legislation and administrative demands. Thus reduction in positive contacts with students may be responsible for the unfilling work conditions and subsequent job dissatisfaction. Cherniss (1978) reported

> "prolonged job stress and consequent job dissatisfaction to be related to negative work habits and behavior. When teaching allows less positive interaction with students, the job may become less satisfying, and the quality of teaching may suffer" (Wangberg, 1984, p. 5).

Teacher stress and dissatisfaction are not simple issues but rather complex human and social problems with no easily defined solutions. Despite this fact, if competent teachers are to be recruited and retained, the factors contributing to teacher stress and job dissatisfaction must be identified in order to formulate and implement policies to reduce teacher stress and work related dissatisfaction.

Work Environment

A major source of stress for the teaching profession is the organizational system in which they must work. It is reasonable, according to Milstein and Galaszewski (1985), that we should "be

exploring means of modifying that important environment in ways that make the life of teachers less stressful" (p. 407).

The professionally mature educator may also be experiencing work related stresses caused by an incongruence between the teacher's personality and the environment of the workplace. "Doctor Holland provides the teacher- administrator team with a helpful tool for analyzing the teacher job environment match" (Holland, 1975, p.5). Once an individual is able to pinpoint which specific conditions in the educational system or surroundings are the irritating factors contributing to low morale, then the teacher, in co-operation with the administrator, can develop and implement a program to attain better environmental- personality congruence for the professionally mature teacher.

"Environmental pressures such as loud noises, uncomfortable work settings, and extreme temperatures are highly correlated with burnout" (Pines et al., 1981). It is imperative that physical surroundings be aesthetic, pleasant and comfortable to prevent burnout.

Work conditions include not only the physical environment but also bureaucratic considerations such as the frequency and intensity of communication problems, paper work, and bureaucratic interferences with the long term goal of individual workers. "Both bureaucratic interferences and administrative annoyances are highly correlated with burnout" (Matthews, Hill & Casteel, 1985, p. 7).

It is possible for school environments to reduce environmental pressures and make the physical work surroundings as comfortable and pleasant as possible. Educational institutions can overcome burnout by simplifying or eliminating many bureaucratic hurdles including complex and unnecessary duplication of numerous forms, muddled communication channels and unnecessarily complicated work related procedures (Matthews et al., 1985).

Schedules and Stress

Flexibility is also encouraged to prevent burnout. Matthews, Hill, and Casteel (1985) suggest that school structures "be made flexible enough to accommodate the individual rather than the individual accommodating the school" (p.8). These researchers stated that individual differences of workers be considered whenever possible.

> "Some workers like frequent change and innovation while others prefer stability, some workers like complex tasks while others prefer more simple tasks, and some workers prefer more contact with other people while others choose detailed paperwork. In order to accommodate differences in a school district, teachers can be encouraged to change teaching assignments, if they wish, within the school and between schools. Extracurricular activity assignments can be varied from year to year" (p. 8).

Another suggestion is to make rules and regulations less stringent. Implementation of mental health days, flexitime or some assignments and creativity can vary demands, accommodate individual preferences and differences, and tap the human potential with increased benefit for all concerned (Matthews et al., 1985, p. 8).

Time out periods or "preps" can be scheduled in the normal work day for all workers but is especially relevant for those whose work

"involves high degrees of emotional, mental, or physical stress" (Matthews et al., 1985, p. 8).

Rewards and Stress

Work significance is another important factor that contributes to feelings of self-worth. "Employees tend to burnout when they feel their role in the organization has little significance" (Lauderdale, 1982).

Quality feedback from administrators can be used to increase the feelings of self-esteem and self-worth for the teacher. Feedback and constructive criticism should enhance the feelings of teachers and should relate to attainable goals. Lack of recognition for extra work and good teaching that is done, lack of positive or constructive feedback and lack of rewards has been correlated highly with burnout (Pines et al., 1981, Fimian & Santoro, 1981).

INTER-RELATIONSHIPS AS STRESSORS

The relevant groups that contribute to teacher stress include: (1) school administrators, (2) colleagues, (3) students, and (4) parents. A study by New York teacher specialists at the Teacher Center Sites reported that less than ideal quality relationships, poor communication and lack of mutual respect with administrators, colleagues and students contributed to teacher distress. It was also noted that educators often felt overwhelmed by excessive or too numerous interactions in a short time.

According to Gupta (1981), the

> "school administrators are critical in determining whether the work lives of teachers are stressful or not" ...and "the school principal emerged as one of the most critical influences on whether or not teachers experienced stress. Characteristics of supervisors and principals that are associated with stress include: making unilateral decisions; delegating the work to subordinates, but not the authority to do the work properly; caring only about the performance of subordinates and not their socio-emotional needs; being overly critical; and not going to bat for subordinates" (p. 10).

Administrators

Schambier (1981), found that teachers have become increasingly alienated and dissatisfied with their work and often burn out because they must work in bureaucratic structures in which decisions are made by administrators. Little or no collaboration or communication with the professionals concerned occurs despite the fact that the decisions are expected to be carried out by these professionals. This pyramidal structure of the organization is based on assumptions regarding human nature as postulated by McGregor and is referred to as Theory X. Theory X assumes that humans are lazy, only perform when it profits them, and must be forced to work and be closely supervised. In order to preserve the structure this type of organization must place major emphasis on the policing of its subordinates to ensure that top level orders are carried out. These managers will go to great lengths and perform ridiculous duties such as checking workrooms to be sure only specified secretarial personnel perform certain duties like pressing a button on the zerox machine. Teachers receiving insufficient copies of zeroxed materials due to clerical error stand by idly waiting for workroom personnel to

return from a washroom break or to stop whatever they are doing in order to place their finger on the copy button. This wastes precious time often worth more than the cost of paper. So instead of increasing efficiency, such stringent rules actually contribute to decreasing it by reducing the efficient use of a worker's time.

Furthermore, in such organizations the subordinate inputs to decision-making are not requested; or if they are have little effect anyway. In such type X organizations, employees are simply told what to do and their significance in such a system is to follow rules and to produce. These organizations operate as if human problems and concerns are unrelated to production, so stringent control is enforced. The type X manager plays "god", thinks he knows what is best for the organization, and develops a list of rules and a system to enforce them. Such managers "will insist, though mistakenly, that for the good of the organization decisions must be made at the top" (Schambier, 1985, p. 5). Anyone who does not conform and follow the regulations does not suit the organizational structure, and since policy is not negotiable that individual will suffer the consequences. In some ways it can be perceived as civilized slavery as it resembles the slave and master hierarchial structure with the master making all the decisions and the slaves having no input in decision making processes that affect them.

Conversely, Theory Y perceives humans as having a need to work or perform, to strive for excellence, and to self-actualize in Maslow's terms. The majority of organizational researchers today perceive the era of Theory X management as a thing of the past and contend that it should be replaced by Theory Y style. The Theory Y managerial style has

a flatter organizational structure than the hierarchial pyramid, and promotes cooperation, shared authority, and responsibility among the administrators and the professionals. Since the theoretical and empirical work of sociologists suggests that teacher alientation is a consequence of the type of organizational structure in which they must work, incorporation of a Theory Y organizational structure would alleviate and solve many problems contributing to current teacher alientation (Schambier, 1981).

In addition, theory Y managerial organizations recognize the employees' practical and relevant contributions and appreciate the potential wealth of information that can be utilized to solve organizational problems if good communication is maintained. The Y type organization abhors singular decision-making at the top. It scorns power structure and encourages participation of subordinates in policies that effect their careers. It attempts to alleviate or to eliminate employee alienation whenever possible.

> "Effective leaders remain sensitive to the internal state and health of the organization. They consider the motivations, attitudes, perceptions, and individual goals of their subordinates. More importantly, they incorporate these into the complex interaction, communication, and decision-making processes of the organization" (Schambier, 1981, p. 6).

There are definite indicators, in education, that much conflict between autonomous, cooperative organizations and heteronomous, dictatorial organizations produces considerable dissatisfaction. Why teachers are dissatisfied is specified by Clard and Siedman (1980) who elaborated as follows:

> "Teachers work in isolation from other adults and from each other, with conscripted students, without sufficient technological support, and without offices or private meeting places. ...Their teaching is interrupted by public address system announcements from administrators. Teachers are observed and rated by supervisors. They employ few or no secretarial services and little or no planning time. The range of decisions over which they exert control ever diminishes as someone tells them what to teach, why students' rights must be protected, why parents and community will have a greater voice in telling them what to do, and how the union is the collective voice for each individual" (Schambier, 1981, p. 2).

Concern about teacher welfare and distress has been expressed by administrators as well as teachers. According to Hill and Parker (1983), "burnout occurs too frequently to represent examples of individual, isolated special education teacher pathology" (p. 2). They further suggest that burnout is symptomatic rather than causative and that it is "the underlying suspected source of system rather than individual dysfunction which most likely contributes to this phenomenon" (p. 2). Another researcher stated that as a teacher and administrator he had become very interested in teacher burnout. Lynch (1981) stated "throughout these years I have seen good teachers, counsellors, and administrators harrassed to the point of not caring" (p. 2). He cited the case of a teacher who despite great interest in the students found that drive and satisfaction from work were decreasing year by year due to "unjustified pressures being placed on her by her school administrator" (Lynch, 1981, p. 2).

Gupta (1981) stated that school administrators must be concerned with burnout for both humanitarian and pragmatic reasons. Excessive stress has detrimental affects on a teacher's physical and mental

health; reduces efficiency and increases turnover. Both the cost of substitutes in cases of illness and cost of turnover can be expensive. It is estimated that an organization lost the equivalent of 2.5 month's salary for each employee who left. Gupta (1981) further suggested that administration could reduce teacher stress by focusing on causes that are under administrative control, distributing equitable work loads, coordinating administrators' demands to avoid conflict, clarifying job requirements, assigning new teachers to less stressful classes, and providing some variation in assignments. She added that "good matching of backgrounds and assignments can be achieved with relative ease, and would be instrumental in relieving teacher stress" (p. 9).

Goens (1981) reported that teachers need competent, understanding, and supportive supervisors. These supervisors must demonstrate the ability to listen, to communicate, and to work with and care about people. They recommended leadership be provided by implementation of a number of suggestions including a united "we" approach, the establishment and maintenance of a "low-conflict, low stress climate emphasizing cooperation, not competition or continual confrontation" (p. 27), application of problem- solving models to obtain solutions to issues acceptable to staff, helping teachers establish personal objectives and allowing them the "autonomy and support to meet objectives" (p.27), promoting a "confidential employee assistance program to give staff members the help they need with emotional, physical, family, or employment pressures" (p.27), reviewing role expectations to eliminate inconsistencies or incongruities, and communicating in a positive and rewarding way by putting them at ease,

listening, being positive, respecting their opinions, treating them as equals, and keeping confidences and promises.

Smith and Milstein (1984), indicated that stress management is not the sole responsibility of teachers. He concluded that many causes of teacher stress emanated from the structural organization of public schools. He recommended that we "expand our focus beyond improving the capabilities of the teacher to cope to include looking at ways of modifying the system itself if we really want to have a positive impact on teacher's stress" (p. 49). These authors further contended that the educational literature was replete with information concerning the educational system and its related affects on teachers. They stated emphatically that fifty years of "educational literature suggested that we have some idea of what our burnout problems are and that we also have some clues about what is at the heart of the problem" (p. 49). Despite awareness of inadequate rewards, lack of relevant power sharing, lack of support from supervisors, inadequate professional training, and awareness of a direct connection between the organizational systems we must work "under" and the need for self-fulfillment. The disparity between system and personal need for self-actualization is in the majority of cases solved by focusing the solution to the problem on "teacher cure thyself" (p.49).

Farber (1984), stated that 87% of the teaching profession reported that "administrative meetings were unhelpful in solving the problems of teachers" (p.329). Cichon and Koff (1978) supported the finding that management was a major source of stress for educators. They also lent

"support to the idea that the critical deficit in the burnout process is a lack of organizational support" (Farber, 1984, p. 329).

Surveys suggest that all administrators, principals as well, are not viewed as supportive of the teachers, and that all administrators "are more interested in protecting their own images and positions than they are in improving school conditions for either teachers or students" (p. 329). Furthermore, these teachers sense that administrators "prefer teachers who 'don't make waves' and don't have problems" (p. 329). Some even went so far as to state that administrators "turned their backs on their former colleagues to safeguard their own position" (p. 329).

Colleagues

Colleagues can also affect the degree of stress, especially if they ostracize one teacher because of religious differences, racial or ethnic background, personality quirks, or social cliques. Teachers need the support of their colleagues and the opportunity to communicate with them in order to cope with work related stress. Barner (1982) reported that special educators and regular teachers received much emotional support from other colleagues in the same building. Both categories of classroom teachers (72% of the regular teachers and 74% of the special educators) stated that they "felt better after discussing classroom problems with other teachers" (p. 7). Conversely, colleagues can be another source of stress in certain situations. "One teacher in our study had severe problems with her work life because other teachers in our study had, in effect, ostraciczed her, and she felt isolated and lonely" (p. 10). Penny (1982) recommended that teachers avoid isolation from their staff members. Teachers need to know that their particular

concerns are not unique and often a problem they are contending with may be "old" to the teaching profession. When they realize there is strength and support available from colleagues, their specific problems tend to diminish.

While Friesen and Williams (1985) reported that teachers identified relationships, communication, supervision, participation, and administration as the second major source of stress for them, most teachers reported that strong co-worker support was beneficial (Barner, 1982). In addition, colleagues were a source of intellectual stimulation and provided both recognition for achievements and opportunities for development of social relationships (Haughey and Murphy, 1983).

Berger and Calabrese (1975) believed that people communicate to reduce uncertainty. Uncertainty is reduced through interpersonal communications and as these communications increase so does the individual's understanding of the behavior of others. Persons who communicate more frequently and extensively, subsequently develop interrelationships with others. In the work environment, teachers attempt to reduce uncertainty by communicating with their colleagues. In sharing their specific work related and even non-work related concerns with their colleagues, teachers develop interrelationships with their supportive co-workers and thereby reduce stress in an informal setting (McLean, 1985: Ray et al., 1985).

Students

The students can also be a source of considerable stress for teachers. Some researchers noted that the reported stress level of teachers was lower for teachers of class sizes below 25, the personal accomplishment was highest for teachers of class size 21-25, and depersonalization was lowest for teachers of class size below 15 (Borthwick, Thornell & Wilkinson, 1982).

Students can influence the potential stressors of teachers in numerous ways. The degree to which students are compliant and obedient, respectful, and interested in their courses, as compared to defiant, disobedient and disinterested in their studies, will influence the extent to which teachers experience work-related stresses. The related issue of discipline and how it is handled by administration is also relevant here. The area of administrative handling of discipline is one of the most potent sources of stress for teachers (Gupta, 1981).

A teacher's control orientation and approach to students can be viewed as authoritarian or humanistic. Teachers who are more authoritarian in their approach emphasize order, hierarchial supraordinate/subordinate communication, distrust of pupils, and impersonal, moralistic attitudes. Teachers who employ a humanistic approach are trusting, accepting and expect students to be responsible and capable of self-discipline. Research suggests that "teachers with a humanistic orientation have fewer problems with classroom discipline and are able to foster interest in the learning process (Harris, 1985, p. 3).

It has been suggested by researchers (Foster, 1980, Johnson, et al., 1981) that the type of student taught may be related to frequency of stress experienced. "The incidence of teacher burnout may be higher among teachers who work with handicapped students" (Taylor and Salend, 1985, p. 5) and teachers of mildly handicapped students are expected to be under more stress than teachers of severely and profoundly handicapped students (Bensky, et al., 1980). Special educators of handicapped or both handicappped and nonhandicapped students experienced significantly stronger professionally induced distress than mainstream teachers of similar categories of students. It was also reported that special educators also experienced significantly stronger stress affects in the area of Emotional and Fatigue Manifestations "than did both groups of mainstream teachers who teach either nonhandicapped or both handicapped and nonhandicapped students" (Cherkes and Fimian, 1982, p. 32).

Another factor, the grade level of students taught, was also perceived to influence teacher stress. Teachers working at the "junior high level ranked highest on the measure of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization and were also lowest on the measure of personal accomplishment" (Zabel and Zabel, 1981, p. 6). On the other hand, teachers of intermediate level students, ranked lowest in emotional exhaustion and depersonalization, but rated second for personal accomplishment. Early Childhood teachers ranked highest for personal accomplishment, as well as high for emotional exhaustion.

Additionally, how the students handle their own stresses significantly influences the classroom environments in which teachers

must work. Many of the major stress reactions of the students are school based. Children fear the reactions of peers and teachers and discipline techniques of school personnel. Most of all they wonder if a parent will return them to their home at the end of a day. For these reasons, teachers should provide a clear overview of the day, in addition to consistent and fair rewards and discipline strategies. During adolescence, as the student progresses through stages of uncertainty, struggles for independence may occur as a result of confusion and ambiguity. Adolescent struggles differ in degree and are generally more obvious than other stages of development. Pressures for decisions of major significance and life-long importance increase stress in these youngsters. Such major life decisions induce much stress, often expressed in disciplinary problems, absenteeism, psychosomatic or metabolic illnesses, skin diseases, delinquency, vandalism, moodiness, melancholy, depression, withdrawal, and in extreme cases, suicidal behavior.

More than the usual amount of stress is often experienced by gifted and learning disabled students. Studies (Gowan, 1971), reported that parents, educators, peers and significant others "exert unusual pressure upon gifted children. These pressures appear to cause drops in creative production" (Bossing and Ruoff, 1982, p. 14). French (1965), stated that in Pennsylvania alone one thousand eight hundred students who dropped out in that school year were in fact high ability students fed up with constant demands and extremely high expectancies they faced at school.

On the other hand, extreme anxiety has also been strongly implicated as a consequence of persistent failure. As anxiety is a stressful condition which causes strong physiological correlates, it affects the organism in various ways. Generally, anxiety serves the purpose of sending a signal to the organism to alert or arouse the person to avoid danger or initiate action. If the threat involved is rather vague, the person experiencing anxiety finds it difficult to mobilize resources or initiate action. Individuals who are cognitively slower in development, have more problems with ordering events, and assessing and evaluating cause and effect relationships (Cruickshank, 1980). For numerous reasons, it has been concluded that individuals who are cognitively slower are less able too to adapt and utilize the signal-alert-arousal properties of stress and anxiety. If anxiety is perceived as a by-product of stress due to failure, then individuals who are cognitively slower are likely to experience more anxiety than their more cognitively advanced peers. Research by Robinson and Robinson (1976) supported the assumption that more cognitively delayed individuals were more anxious. The anxiety experienced by students in this category is likely to be expressed in ways that affect the special educator's stress level as well.

According to studies by Freudenberger (1975),

> "stress is felt because special educators are typically trained to be child focused, attending to individual needs and differences, and as a result, when children do not readily respond and learn in a manner which is congruent with the notion of the good or excellent teacher they perceive themselves to be, they may become disappointed, frustrated, and angry at themselves, their students, and parents" (Hill & Parker, 1983, p. 2).

This relational and interactional problem can be compared to dysfunctions in family systems. Special educators in stressful situations become "parent-like". The majority of teachers find that it is difficult for even the most competent of them to teach their own youngsters because it is difficult not to get emotional, frustrated, and angry at their youngster in home instruction situations. This teacher-child-parent dysfunction typifies circumstances in which they are unable to extricate themselves from their problems. This unrecognized special education problem is similarly evident in relational issues. These include problems with triangulation, problem ownership, defensive responses, and evidence of progress expected for the student to be at a level above zero.

Parents

For this reason the teacher is also encouraged to clarify problem ownership and to avoid the temptation to reason with feelings. In stressful situations feelings and emotions may be at high levels so "teachers are often spoken to by parents in a manner that contributes significantly to stress, frustration, and angry feelings" (Hill & Parker, 1983, p.11). The emotions engendered by such verbal attacks contribute significantly to anxiety in parent conferences and interaction, and ultimately to burnout.

Administrators' disapproval of less than ideal parent-teacher relationships exerts considerable pressure upon a teacher caught in an emotionally charged situation with an unreasonable parent. This lack of administrative support places the teacher in a "no win" situation and increases the stress experienced by the educator. This accentuates the

feelings engendered by lack of understanding by administration and contributes to further individual isolation.

Communication with parents can be particularly stressful and Hill and Parker (1983) advocated that teachers: (1) not parent their students; (2) only teach during school hours; (3) make and keep appointment only interviews with parents; (4) avoid topics of a personal, gossipy nature, especially if these are not related to teaching and learning and; (5) give fewer but more meaningful homework assignments and tests.

Lortie (1975), reported that teachers had little "sense of appreciation or support for the difficult work they do" (p. 407). Lortie's research project supported the educator's contentions that "administrators, the school board, parents, and students did not appreciate their efforts or understand the complexity of their jobs" (p. 407).

Summary

In conclusion, the literature suggests that stress and burnout is a recognized occupational hazard of the teaching profession. This painful, destructive response to excessive stress has numerous contributory factors including job-related sources of stress such as role conflict, ambiguity and overload, responsibility for others, repetitiveness, lack of control, pupil load, job dissatisfaction, work environment, schedules, and work significance, in addition to demanding inter-relationships with administrators, colleagues, students and parents. This present research is an attempt to study special education

teachers in an effort to determine and assess their perceptions of their roles as special educators.

CHAPTER 3

INSTRUMENTATION AND METHODOLOGY

In the following chapter the development of the research instrument and a detailed account of the procedures employed in gathering data are presented.

PERMISSION FOR THE STUDY

The Deputy Superintendents for the County of Barrhead No. 11, Westlock School Division No. 37, and the Director of Curriculum Services for Wetaskiwin School District No. 264 granted permission to this investigator to circulate questionnaires to obtain demographic information and research data from teachers in their jurisdictions. Unrestricted sampling of teachers was allowed in the County of Barrhead. However, the Deputy Superintendent of Westlock was reluctant to grant permission to approach all the teachers since someone had done a recent survey for the purpose of writing a thesis in a related area. When the researcher then asked if the specialized teachers could be tapped he unhesitatingly consented and permission was granted to obtain information and data from the Special Educators in the division. The Director of Services for Westaskiwin, being both a former colleague and a friend, went out of her way to assist in distributing, gathering, and mailing the the results of the research packages.

DESIGNING THE QUESTIONNAIRE

Various research questionnaires were examined and the MBI - Maslach Burnout Inventory - Human Services Survey developed by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson of the University of California was selected as the

most relevant instrument for this investigator's purposes. Appropriate materials were obtained from the Consulting Psychologist's Press and adapted for computer processing. The research packages compiled included: (1) an introductory letter which explained the purpose of the study and the specified instructions for the appropriate use of the computer scoring sheets; (2) an instruction and questionnaire sheet developed to obtain demographic information and to assure absolute confidentially and anonymity, (3) the MBI - Maslach Burnout Inventory; and (4) the computer scoring sheet.

The investigator had two restraints in the overall design of the questionnaire. First, the questionnaire must be limited in length. Other forms and paperwork distributed to teachers is often returned incomplete or not at all. Being overwhelmed with forms is a common complaint among teachers. To increase the teacher's desire to participate in the study, the investigator decided to select a questionnaire that was both short and easy to complete.

The second constraint was to select an instrument that would not be considered too personal or offensive. The researcher was concerned with how her colleagues would react to the study and evaluation of their responses.

In designing the questionnaire, it was assumed that the teachers that would constitute the sample would have been placed in various teaching positions, therefore, the research inventory was preceded by a questionnaire to obtain demographic information. A core set of questions pertaining to age, sex, teaching assignment, number of years in this particular assignment, total years of teaching experience, and

the percentage of time in this teaching position. (See Appendix A for a sample of the questionnaire.)

The MBI - Maslach Burnout Inventory was selected because one of its' features provided the investigator with an instrument that could be both subjectively evaluated by the subject and objectively scored by the researcher. Items for the MBI were designed to measure aspects of the burnout syndrome and were written statements about personal feelings or attitudes. The term recipients used in the items refers to the people for whom the subject provides service, care, or treatment. Each statement is rated on two dimensions: frequency and intensity. The frequency scale is labeled at each point and ranges from 0 (never) to 6 (every day). The intensity scale ranges from 0 (never) to 7 (major, very strong). (See Appendix B, for sample of the MBI - Maslach Burnout Inventory - Human Services Survey.)

THE POPULATION AND THE SAMPLE

The population for this study included all full-time teachers at the Elementary and Junior High School levels in the County of Barrhead and all full-time Special Education teachers at the Elementary and Junior High School levels in the Westlock and the Westaskiwin School Divisions. Any specialists such as counsellors, psychologists, speech therapists, itinerant teachers or part-time administrators were eliminated from the sample. The investigator consequently included only those educators who were full-time classroom teachers in three areas: (1) regular classroom teachers in charge of students in the mainstream educational program; (2) resource room teachers responsible for the upgrading of specific skills of regular students placed in their care

for short-term remediation; and, (3) self-contained teachers in charge of students who demonstrate a lag of two or more years in academic achievement when compared with peers in the regular mainstream programs. One hundred and six teachers met the criteria to be included in the population.

DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES

In the actual study, the questionnaires were packaged in unsealed brown envelopes so that the computer scoring sheets could be returned to an appointed distributor in each county using this unmarked envelope, sealed by each subject, thus ensuring anonymity of responses. The distributors, where possible, were fellow teachers selected to be nonthreatening to the subjects. Of the 106 subjects in the sample 78 completed and returned the research data sheets. Seven forms were incomplete or inappropriately filled in and therefore were deleted as spoiled responses. Since the researcher had endeavored to ensure anonymity to encourage candid responses, she was unable to contact these respondents to complete or correct their spoiled response sheets.

One of the problems in other studies, similar to this one, has been that subjects identified for inclusion in the sample have refused to participate. In fact, of the 106 educators selected, 78 participated and 71 returned forms that were adequately and accurately completed data sheets ready for computer processing. Since 78 of the 106 people selected responded, this demonstrates a 73.5% participation level. Unfortunately, due to spoiled forms, only 67% of the forms were useable for data analysis.

TABULATION OF THE DATA

The questionnaire was divided into two parts, the demographic information and the research inventory. The first part containing the demographic information was coded to match columns K, L, M, N, O, and so forth on the data sheet. Answers to each question on the human services inventory were matched to numbers on the data sheet to facilitate computer data analysis. The data analysis is presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 4

THE QUALITATIVE STUDY

Orientation and Procedure

The life world of a special education teacher is influenced by obvious features including location of the school, size of the facility, resources and materials available to the staff, the activities in which the students participate, customs that have been set by predecessors, administrative styles and guidance, parent conferences and so on. These are a relevant part of the educator's world. However, the lived world of special education teachers encompasses more than the daily encounters mentioned. Of even greater significance is the underlying meaning that is attached to the situation and the events as they are experienced. Special educators are affected by and in turn affect the world as they enter into their professional work. In order to understand the world of these professionals one must reveal what they experience and feel, and discover why they act and react in a certain manner. Qualitative orientations and approaches presume that the inner and the outer aspects of behavior are valuable sources of information with interesting and enlightening components suitable for perusal, assessment, and analysis.

Rist (1980) suggests that various types of problems require diverse research orientation and procedures. Bogdan and Biklen (1981), and Van Manen (1984), advocate probing and exploring the meaning of human behavior, focusing on the context of human interaction, and searching for the connecting links relating subjective states of being and behavior.

This type of research approach is commonly termed "qualitative" or "the human sciences perspective" because it recognizes the importance of our human awareness or consciousness. These terms indicate a search for the underlying meaning of our human awareness and experience.

This research project was concerned mainly with the lived experiences of special educators and acknowledgements of the significance of the special educator's human experiences. Levels of awareness and consciousness were examined and discussed to perceive, explore, and understand some underlying meaning. Strategies included observation of the participant in the work situation and in-depth interview sessions to uncover feelings and discover the underlying states of conscious awareness. While it was rather simple to explain the observable world of the participant, the search for the underlying meaning of these experiences could only be developed through a mutual exchange of ideas and lengthy discussions. Through observation and participation this researcher obtained a clearer understanding of the teachers' feelings, experiences and perceptions. Through this sharing of experiences, the researcher established the rapport that was so essential prior to sharing and delving into the inner feelings and thoughts of the participants.

In order to understand the essence of this deeper meaning, ample opportunity was provided so that special education teachers could relate personal experiences through casual conversation, wide scope interviews, and elaborations on comments recorded or notes jotted down as meaningful experiences occurred in their daily routines. Contact was maintained, and observations and interviews were carried on over a period of four

months. Contact was maintained for an additional period for informal meetings, conversations and interviews. During this time related or observed experiences were written up as each interview and observation period occurred. These were re-examined and discussed to obtain further clarification, insight, and understanding. As a consequence of these procedures themes began to emerge and the researcher focused on certain recurring experiences and feelings.

The Initial Stage

Initially, a loosely structured interview was arranged and topics of wide scope were discussed. The discussion covered both the topics suggested by the researcher and those introduced by the subject. Observations and field notes were made and re-examined during subsequent conversations and interviews. A tape recorder was not generally used as it was cumbersome, conspicuous and inconvenient while walking down a hallway, on a playground, or in a staffroom. It certainly cut staffroom conversation to a halt when colleagues realized their conversations and comments could be taped. However, one teacher preferred taped sessions as she had previously used recordings in her personal research and had no qualms about such techniques.

The Researcher

During the winter term, while the researcher attended university she approached two first year teachers and obtained their permission to interview and observe them for the purpose of writing an assigned research report. The researcher realized that since she had been granted only one year sabbatical to do her masters program, the completion of her thesis would be a major problem. Hence, she elected

to devote as much time and effort to a feasible research project as possible and to write a research report based on her findings. As a researcher she felt that more on site work would have been an asset. However, the possibility was often negated due to time factors, course schedules, and distances of travel required. So the researcher spent most of her sessions as an interviewer of the special educator after school hours. For Anne, most of these were conducted in her own home, sometimes over a hot buttered rum, so the distractions were limited and the atmosphere rather informal. She really appreciated these after a long day, especially in cold weather, as she travelled more than thirty miles to reach the researcher's home. However, Kathy was interviewed in her parents' home when she 'touched home base' on the weekends.

The researcher found the information and data collected from these neophyte professionals both interesting and relevant to the field of special education. For this reason she decided to retain the informative data obtained from one of these subjects and to incorporate it in her study on special educators. She felt it would add another dimension and expand the knowledge base if both neophyte and veteran specialists' experiences were included in the study.

In the autumn, the researcher returned to a full-time teaching position with her previous school board. She was given a new teaching assignment and in this position she worked closely with her fellow special educators. She obtained their consent to be participants not only in school related activities but also in her research project.

The researcher wrote many descriptive notes of the teachers' related experiences and the role was chiefly one of observer,

interviewer, recorder and fellow teacher. In later discussions she questioned, clarified and interpreted.

Research Procedure

Participants

Considering that the purpose of the research was to obtain an in-depth understanding of special educators experiences, that the study was carried out in conjunction with other courses, and that the experienced teachers were observed and interviewed while the researcher was a full time member of the special education teaching staff, it was necessary to limit the number of subjects and the environmental settings. One beginning teacher and three experienced educators working in rural communities were chosen to participate in this project. In order to protect the identity of the teachers involved, fictitious names were substituted. One of the teachers had graduated from the University of Alberta while the other three graduated from universities in Saskatchewan, Ontario and Nova Scotia.

Establishing Rapport

Approval was granted by the school administrators for research data to be collected. This was a relatively easy matter for the researcher as she is a colleague of some of the administrators concerned. The prospective teachers were contacted by telephone and the intent and scope of the project was explained. Since these teachers were known to the researcher their approval for participation was readily obtained. The novice teacher had been a former classmate of the researcher in two special education courses in the Department of Educational Psychology. The veteran teachers were colleagues and fellow staff members. Since

rapport had been established previously convenient times for the initial observation and interview were scheduled.

Field Observation

The researcher spent occasional times attending classes and functions relevant to the experiences of these teachers. One teacher had a split class position which involved teaching Junior High students in an adaptive setting for the mornings only, and elementary resource room students for the afternoons. The second teacher taught young trainable handicapped students below twelve years of age.

Anne spent most of the morning in her classroom with the Junior High students. These four young fellows were integrated into the mainstream for the afternoon schedules. In the afternoons she spent a portion of the time in her classroom with resource students coming to her for specialized instruction and another portion of the time in regular classes providing guidance and assistance to these resource students in their regular home room environment.

Since much of Anne's noon hour was devoted to shelving materials used for the older students in the morning and re-organizing appropriate teaching in the afternoon, interviews were held at the researcher's home after school hours. This provided for privacy and opportunity to explore the pros and cons of teaching in a relaxed, informal way.

Margaret, Lynn and Rosemarie were full-time teachers and have taught young trainable pupils, learning disabled and educable handicapped students. Their various work environments included a small, modern, school which had been amalgated with a large elementary school, as well as subdivided classrooms located in a large junior high and

senior high school complex. Lynn's first assignment was conducted in a wing attached to the main school building by a hallway with ramps to eliminate stairs for the convenience of the physically handicapped. Her noon hours often involved supervision of these special needs students. This term she is working with Marg aret and the researcher in a junior highschool which accommodates over five hundred students. This building adjoins a modern highschool with shared facilities to provide many opportunities for special courses such as Industrial Arts.

Interviews and Conferences

The researcher had constructed a questionnaire with several major areas or broad topics to discuss for the initial meeting. From then on the teachers were encouraged to express and elaborate upon their feelings and experiences. The data in this study were obtained through informal discussions, obvservations, interviews and telephone conversations.

Data Collections

Field notes were kept by the researcher during observational periods and during conversations to be referred to for clarification and authenticity. The teachers were asked to maintain simple anecdotal notes of thoughts or experiences as they occurred between interviews with the researcher. One teacher preferred to be taped for some of the interviews as she felt it would be more efficient.

Descriptive Portrayals

In the process of observing these special education teachers in their natural work environment and having them relate what they actually

were experiencing, the researcher constructed descriptive portrayals of these experiences, emotional feelings and perceptions.

Validity

The main emphasis of this project was to search for an understanding of the underlying meaning and the reality of being a teacher as lived and experienced by special education teachers. Thus it was imperative that the final analysis and portrayal have internal validity. If the reader is expected to comprehend and conceptualize this experience it must be a perceptive, plausible account of the teachers' related experiences of their world. The teachers read the portrayals and expressed satisfaction with the accuracy of relating their feelings and perceptions. Two other volunteers read the descriptions and felt they had discerned and grasped the context of these specialists experiences as teachers of special needs students.

Interpretation

The researcher attempted to interpret these special education teachers' experiences as they expressed them. The researcher tried to understand their lived, daily experiences. Many feelings and experiences were related to the researcher and she probed for further interpretation when new thoughts or ideas were expressed, or when new insights were illuminated.

With further insight and illumination these began to emerge and the researcher began to "tease out" these commonalities or themes underlying the experiences of these professional specialists.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter, the research problem and the research design were discussed. In the second chapter the relevant literature was examined. In chapter three the Instrumentation and Methodology was outlined. In chapter four the orientation and procedure of the qualitative study was explained. In the present chapter the results of the quantitative data analysis are reported.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The findings of the research are reported herein. Initially the results relating to the hypotheses of the thesis are reported. Thereafter, ancillary trends which relate primarily to the demographic data are considered. To facilitate ease of reader recall, the hypotheses are restated, the actual analyses are depicted and followed by the conclusions which may be drawn from the data.

Hypotheses

The intensity and frequency of teacher stress increases in direct proportion to the restrictiveness of the classroom setting. That is, Special Education teachers who are alienated or segregated from the mainstream educators, students and programs experience more stress related to occupational burnout than mainstream or resource room teachers.

In order to investigate whether Special Education teachers tend to experience more stress than their colleagues, the Maslach Burnout

Inventory (MBI) was administered and analyzed. The six variables are reported as six separate hypotheses.

Hypothesis I

Educators who are categorized as Special Education teachers and placed in self-contained classroom teaching situations will report more frequent depersonalization than their colleagues.

Analysis

In order to test the above hypothesis, means on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) were calculated to obtain the frequency of Depersonalization for the three teacher groups in the study. These means and standard deviations appear in Table 1.

TABLE 1

Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups

	Mainstream	Resource Room	Special Education
Mean	8.953	4.500	9.111
S.D.	4.076	2.121	5.738

In order to validate that a statistical difference exists, a one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts were performed. The results of these calculations are reported in Tables 2 and 3.

TABLE 2

Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Between	0.17428833	2	87.14	4.30	0.017
Within	0.13781765	68	20.27		

In Table 3, the groups compared are the mainstream teachers (Group 1), the resource room teachers (Group 2), and the Special Education teachers of self-contained classes (Group 3).

TABLE 3

Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups

Group	Mean Difference	Standard Error	df1	df2	F	F/(J-1)	p
1-2	4.45	2.50	2	68	7.94	3.97	0.023
1-3	-0.16	1.60	2	68	0.02	0.01	0.992
2-3	-4.61	3.15	2	68	6.74	3.37	0.040

As may be determined from Table 2, the analysis of variance indicates that there is a statistical difference between the means of groups 1 and 2, and between groups 2 and 3. The probability exceeds the .05 level. In addition, as noted from the probabilities depicted in Table 3, the results of the Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrast showed that differences between the teacher groups (ie. mainstream x resource room, and resource room x special education) both exceed .05.

Conclusion

Given these reported results, it may be concluded that Hypothesis I is confirmed. Analysis reveals that a difference in the frequency of depersonalization among the groups does exist. Group 2 (resource room teachers) do not appear to experience significant frequency of depersonalization in their relationships with their students. However, both mainstream and special education teachers report experiencing frequency of depersonalization at a statistically significant level.

Hypothesis II

Educators categorized as Special Education teachers will report higher levels of depersonalization from their students than their colleagues.

Analysis

In order to test the above hypothesis, means on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) were calculated to obtain the Intensity of Depersonalization for the three teacher groups in the study. These means and standard deviations appear in Table 4.

TABLE 4

Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups

	Mainstream	Resource Room	Special Education
Mean	14.814	13.200	14.444
S.D.	3.848	3.633	3.800

In order to validate whether a statistical difference exists, a one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts were performed. The results of these calculations are reported in Tables 5 and 6.

TABLE 5

Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Between	0.21194092	2	10.60	0.26	0.770
Within	0.27525400	68	40.48		

In Table 6, the groups compared are the mainstream teachers (Group 1), the resource room teachers (Group 2), and the self- contained Special Education teachers (Group 3).

TABLE 6

Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups

Group	Mean Difference	Standard Error	df1	df2	F	F/(J-1)	p
1-2	1.61	4.99	2	68	0.52	0.26	0.771
1-3	0.37	3.19	2	68	0.04	0.02	0.979
2-3	-1.24	6.30	2	68	0.25	0.12	0.884

As may be determined from Table 6, the analysis of variance indicates that there is no statistical difference between the means of all three groups since none exceed .05.

Conclusion

Given the reported results, it may be concluded that Hypothesis II is not confirmed. There is no significant difference in the intensity of depersonalization for special education teachers compared to their colleagues.

Hypothesis III

Educators categorized as Special Education teachers will more frequently report experiencing lower levels of personal accomplishment than their colleagues in resource rooms or in mainstream education.

Analysis

In order to test the above hypothesis, means on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) were calculated to obtain the frequency of personal

accomplishment for the three teacher groups in the study. These means and standard deviations appear in Table 7.

TABLE 7

Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups

	Mainstream	Resource Room	Special Education
Mean	35.116	38.900	33.055
S.D.	6.388	6.118	7.033

In order to validate that a statistical differennce exists, a one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts were performed. The results of these calculations are reported in Tables 8 and 9.

TABLE 8

Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Between	0.21959961	2	109.80	2.58	0.083
Within	0.28922517	68	42.53		

In Table 9, the groups compared are mainstream teachers (Group 1), Resource Room Teachers (Group 2), and Special Education teachers (Group 3).

TABLE 9

Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups

Group	Mean Difference	Standard Error	df1	df2	F	F/(J-1)	p
1-2	-3.78	5.24	2	68	2.73	1.37	0.262
1-3	2.06	3.35	2	68	1.27	0.63	0.534
2-3	5.84	6.62	2	68	5.16	2.58	0.083

As may be determined from Table 9, the analysis of variance indicates there is no statistical difference between the means of all three groups using the .05 level of probablity.

Conclusion

Given the results, it may be stated that Hypothesis III is not confirmed using the .05 level of probablity. There is no significant difference in the intensity of depersonalization for special education teachers compared to their colleagues in resource rooms or in the mainstream.

Hypothesis IV

Educators categorized as Special Education teachers will report experiencing lower levels of personal accomplishment with greater intensity than their colleagues in resource rooms or in mainstream education.

Analysis

In order to test the above hypothesis, means on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) were calculated to determine the levels of intensity regarding personal accomplishment for the three teacher groups in the study. These means and standard deviations appear Table 10.

TABLE 10

Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups

	Mainstream	Resource Room	Special Education
Mean	38.116	41.700	35.722
S.D.	7.004	5.186	8.237

In order to validate whether a statistical difference exists, a one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts were performed. The results of these calculations are reported in Tables 11 and 12.

TABLE 11

Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Between	0.23086011	2	115.43	2.27	0.111
Within	0.34561201	68	50.83		

In Table 12, the groups compared are the mainstream teachers (Group 1), the resource room teachers (Group 2), and the Special Education teachers of self-contained classes (Group 3).

TABLE 12

Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups

Group	Mean Difference	Standard Error	df1	df2	F	F/(J-1)	p
1-2	-3.58	6.26	2	68	2.05	1.03	0.364
1-3	2.38	4.01	2	68	1.43	0.72	0.493
2-3	5.98	7.91	2	68	4.52	2.26	0.112

As may be determined from Table 12, the analysis of variance indicates there is no statistical difference between the means of all three groups.

Conclusion

Given the present results, it may be stated that Hypothesis IV is not confirmed. There is no statistical evidence to indicate that any group of teachers experiences more intense levels of stress contributing to burnout due to lowered personal accomplishment.

Hypothesis V

Educators categorized as self-contained Special Education teachers will report more frequent emotional exhaustion related to their teaching assignment than their colleagues.

Analysis

In order to test the above hypothesis, means on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) for the three teacher groups were calculated. These means and standard deviations appear in Table 13.

TABLE 13

Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups

	Mainstream	Resource Room	Special Education
Mean	20.558	4.500	24.722
S.D.	8.961	10.416	7.629

In order to validate that a statistical difference exists a one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe Post-Hoc Contrasts were performed. The results of these calculations are reported in Tables 14 and 15.

TABLE 14

Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Between	0.55950781	2	279.75	3.56	0.034
Within	0.13781765	68	78.51		

In Table 15, the groups compared are the mainstream teachers (Group 1), the resource room teachers (Group 2), and the Special Education teachers of self-contained classes (Group 3).

TABLE 15

Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups

Group	Mean Difference	Standard Error	df1	df2	F	F/(J-1)	p
1-2	5.16	9.68	2	68	2.64	1.32	0.273
1-3	-4.16	9.19	2	68	2.80	1.40	0.253
2-3	-9.22	12.21	2	68	6.96	3.48	0.036

As may be determined from Table 15, the analysis of variance indicates that there is a statistical difference between the means of resource room and special education teacher groups. The probability exceeds the .05 level. In addition, as can be seen from the probabilities reported in Table 15, the results of the Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrast indicated that differences between the teacher groups (ie. resource room x special education) exceeds .05.

Conclusion

Given the present results, it may be stated that Hypothesis V is confirmed. Educators categorized as special education teachers of self-contained classes will report more frequent emotional exhaustion related to their teaching assignment than did their colleagues in resource rooms, but not "mainstream".

Hypothesis VI

Educators categorized as special education teachers of self-contained classes will report greater levels of stress intensity relating to emotional exhaustion, than their colleagues.

Analysis

In order to test the above hypothesis, means on the Maslach Burnout Inventory (MBI) for the three teacher groups in the study were calculated. These means and standard deviations appear in Table 16.

TABLE 16

Means and Standard Deviations on the MBI for the Teacher Groups

	Mainstream	Resource Room	Special Education
Mean	31.977	33.800	36.444
S.D.	10.896	11.390	11.942

In order to validate whether a statistical difference exists, a one-way analysis of variance and Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts were performed. The results of these calculations are reported in Tables 17 and 18.

TABLE 17

Analysis of Variance of the MBI Scores for the Three Teacher Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F	p
Between	0.25533594	2	127.67	1.01	0.369
Within	0.85789766	68	126.16		

In Table 18, the groups compared are the mainstream teachers (Group 1), the resource room teachers (Group 2), and the Special Education teachers of self-contained classes (Group 3).

TABLE 18

Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrasts Across the Three Teacher Groups

Group	Mean Difference	Standard Error	df1	df2	F	F/(J-1)	p
1-2	-1.82	15.55	2	68	0.21	0.11	0.899
1-3	-4.47	9.94	2	68	2.01	1.00	0.372
2-3	-2.64	19.63	2	68	0.36	0.18	0.837

As may be determined from Table 17, the analysis of variance indicates that there is no statistical difference between the means of all three groups. In addition, as can be seen from the probabilities reported in Table 18, the results of the Scheffe Post-Hoc Pairwise Contrast indicated that differences between the three groups (ie. mainstream x resource room, mainstream x special education and resource room x special education) do not exceed .05.

Conclusion

Given the present results, it may be stated that Hypothesis VI is not confirmed. Educators categorized as special education teachers of self-contained classes will report similar levels of intensity of emotional exhaustion compared to their colleagues in regular or resource room teaching assignments.

Ancillary Findings

In this section, findings concerning the demographic characteristics of the educators in the three teacher groups in the sample are reported. Demographic characteristics considered to be important in the study were sex, age, teaching assignment, years in the assignment and the total years of teaching experience.

Question Number I

The first question established the subject's sex. The findings summarized in Table 19 revealed that 53.5 percent were males and 46.5 percent were females.

TABLE 19

Number and Percentage of Male and Female Participants

	Sex	
	Male	Female
Total Sample		
Number	51	55
Percentage	48.1	51.8
Participants		
Number	38	33
Percentage	53.5	46.5
Participants Incomplete Data		
Number	4	3
Percentage	5.12	3.84

Percentages calculated from the figures presented demonstrate that 53.5 percent were males and 46.5 percent were females.

Question 2

Question number two established the subjects' ages. The subjects ranged in age categories from 20-29, 30-39, and 40 years plus. There were 28.2 percent in the 20-29 year old group, 39.4 percent in the 30-39 year old group, and 32.4 percent in the 40 years plus category. In this sample the majority of teachers who participated were in the 30-39 year old age category.

TABLE 20

Age Group and Category of Teaching Assignment

	20-29 years	30-39 years	40+ years
Participants			
Number	23	28	20
Percentage	28.2	39.4	32.4

Question 3

Question number three established the subjects' teaching assignment. The sample consisted of forty three subjects (60.6 percent) who were mainstream or regular classroom teachers, ten subjects (14.1 percent) who were resource room teachers, and eighteen subjects (25.4 percent) who were categorized as special education teachers.

TABLE 21

Number and Percentage in Various Teaching Assignments

	Mainstream	Resource Room	Special Education
Participants			
Number	43	10	18
Percentage	60.6	14.1	25.4

Question 4

In question number four the subjects were asked to specify the number of years they have been in their present teaching assignment. The findings are presented in Table 22. The sample consisted of thirty-two subjects (45.1 percent) who had spent one to three years in their teaching position, twenty-two subjects (31.0 percent) who had 4-9 years experience in their teaching assignment, nine subjects (12.7

percent) who had spent from 10-15 years in their teaching station, and eight subjects (11.3 percent) who had more than 16 years in their present assignment.

TABLE 22

Number and Percentage of Teaching Years in the Present Assignment

	1-3 years	4-9 years	10-15 years	16+ years
Participants				
Number	32	22	9	8
Percentage	45.1	31.0	12.7	11.3

The data of these participants revealed that the largest group of teachers (45.1 percent) had spent only one to three years in their present teaching position. This information seems to suggest that the conclusions of the study are based heavily influenced by the reports of teachers who have relatively recent teaching assignments. It also indicates that few subjects have remained in their teaching assignments for ten to fifteen years or for sixteen or more years. Considering the availability of openings in the job market this finding was quite contrary to what one would anticipate.

Question 5

Question number five requested subjects to indicate their total number of years of teaching experience. The findings presented in Table 23 revealed that eighteen subjects (25.4 percent) were in each of the first two categories indicating they had from one to three years and from four to nine years teaching experience. Another twenty-three (32.4 percent) indicated that the majority of teachers in this group had from

ten to fifteen years professional experience. The twelve subjects (16.9 percent) reported teaching for more than sixteen years.

TABLE 23

Number and Percentage of Years of Teaching Experience

	1-3 years	4-9 years	10-15 years	16+ years
Participants				
Number	18	18	23	12
Percentage	25.4	25.4	32.4	16.9

The data revealed that the majority of teachers reported they had from ten to fifteen years of teaching experience. The cross section of information relating to years of work experience indicated that teaching experience was well distributed with 50.8 percent of the teachers reporting less than ten years experience and the remaining 49.3 percent reporting more than ten years of professional experience. The conclusions of the study are then based on a good distribution of teachers representing professionals at various points in their careers.

Summary of Findings

The results indicate that both mainstream and special education teachers actually do report that: (1) they experience greater frequency of depersonalization than resource room teachers; and (2) they experience more frequent emotional exhaustion related to their teaching assignment than their colleagues in resource room teaching situations.

From the findings it was established that a relationship exists between the level of stress relating to professional burnout and the

reporting of experiences pertaining to the assignment. The ancillary findings further indicated that the largest group of teachers in the sample represented the 30-39 year old age group, reported from either one to three years teaching experience in the present assignment and reported from ten to fifteen years of total teaching experience.

CHAPTER 6

THEMES EMERGING FROM THE RELATED EXPERIENCES OF SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

INTRODUCTION

Chapter Six provides the researcher's descriptive portrayals of the lived experiences of four special education teachers. These descriptions and portrayals of themes that emerged are the researcher's reflections and interpretations based on the observations and extensive interviews with these special educators regarding their personal experiences. Every attempt was made to portray these experiences as accurately as possible for Anne, Margaret, Lynn and Rosemarie. Each of these individuals read the interpretation relevant to them and acknowledged it as an accurate description of their personal experiences.

EARLY EXPERIENCES AS A TEACHER

Beginning Teaching

The first weeks of school were so exciting, challenging and extremely busy that the young teacher was caught up in a whirlwind of activity. Time flew by without being fully aware of its transition and autumn leaves had fallen before the full realization of the importance of pacing units of study had consciously registered. The conscious dawning of the time factor suddenly surfaced and became another contributing stressor.

High stress and anxiety resulted after the initial flurry of diagnosis and assessment procedures. These procedures were very demanding on the teacher's time and much effort was spent testing and

analyzing the results to ascertain the student's current academic functional level. While she was able to assess and estimate the level of the academic skills of her students, she felt inadequate in her ability to estimate and project an appropriate goal of achievement for her pupils. She did not know if she was seriously underestimating or overestimating the amount of learning that could be expected from her educably mentally handicapped or learning disabled students. This inability to ascertain an appropriate estimate of skill and task development for future months was the major source of anxiety related to the task of developing and implementing individualized educational programs for her pupils. The full awareness of the complexity of this step in the process became painfully apparent. As Ann said, "Diagnosis, and then what?" She became increasingly conscious of the fact that the development and implementation of an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) was a very taxing and challenging task.

Experiencing Role Ambiguity and Lack of Direction

Specifically, Anne was in a quandary because she didn't know whether to place instructional emphasis on pre-vocational life skills or on the building of academic skills. She felt confused and isolated as there was no one there to direct her in those first few weeks of school and the supervisor did not arrive to provide guidance until mid October. Anne rated this feeling of uncertainty and this lack of direction as a significantly high stress factor in her early professional life.

Experiencing Lack of Appropriate Materials

The beginning special education teacher quickly became aware of the fact that course outlines of study for special needs students are not as structured as curriculum outlines for regular students. A wide array of materials may be suggested but few, if any, can be used in the original form. The young teacher found that she was spending endless hours drawing bits and pieces of information from various sources to build and unify a unit of study. Most educational materials available were produced for the regular student and some adaptation of materials was required to make these appropriate for the learning disabled or handicapped student.

Since these students progress more slowly the problem is compounded. Not only must the special education teacher adapt the materials but she must adapt much more of it to use over an extended period of time. In case of the more severely handicapped children, the teacher may be required to make her own sentences based on the few vocabulary words of a beginning reader. Since no reading series is so finely tailored, the special education teacher may be required to build a small individualized reading unit for a specific student.

Experiencing Work Overload and High Expectations

Anne found that the visit of the supervisor was both a comforting and disconcerting experience. Some of the guidance was reassuring as in the case of providing direction of course emphasis. However, some of the advice was disturbing. Although Anne agreed that some of the supervisor's suggestions were sound, these were difficult to implement. Furthermore, she had to tell the supervisor that she simply could not

handle any more work and that she could not at this point take the responsibility for developing special programs for the integration of her students into the regular Junior High options. Since she was already planning for these students for half of the school day and planning for individualized resource students for the remainder of the day she simply couldn't handle the additional demand of programming for her students' integration into the mainstream under the authority of the regular teacher. Anne said it was hard to keep up and planning was a day-to-day affair. She struggled for daily survival and developed and wrote up units as she went along or after she had taught them. She admitted to this with a sheepish grin. The researcher understood. She remembered a former roommate doing exactly the same thing.

The teacher found that despite long hours and constant work she could never really get on top of things. If she made games and activities for centres, she had too little time for lesson plans. If she spent weekends making lesson plans or activities she had little time for family, friends or housekeeping.

Experiencing Organizational Stress

Anne quickly found that she was lacking an organizational system to systematically handle the volume of materials. "I didn't know what to do with all that stuff coming at me-- forms for this, forms for that -- and all those teacher-made sheets!" She lost some materials and thought that when she sorted through all the papers she may have inadvertantly tossed them out.

Being in a split teaching position Anne found she could not leave materials set up as she had to accommodate different age groups. "I

can't leave materials set up. There is a constant hassle with materials in a split position."

In addition the novice teacher worried about "getting it all together". She felt there was far too much emphasis on paperwork and IEP's. Everything she was required to do, like recording attendance, filling out forms, planning activities, lessons and units, and developing IEP's seemed to take so much time.

Accommodating Individual Differences

Anne found it extremely difficult to switch from different teaching posts and assignments to accommodate the varying levels of age, grade, and ability. This challenge to meet the individual needs of her students was difficult from the perspective of language usage, level of conceptual concepts, expectations of work produced, and from the organizational view with consideration and selection of appropriately interesting and challenging materials.

She also found that the lack of proper placement of students compounded the problems. This extended the levels of variability with respect to abilities demonstrated and special needs required. She realized her "students needed help, but what was help?"

Developing Classroom Management Skills

Students at the Junior High level were more difficult to manage than the elementary students, especially in classroom discussions. Any reprimand for inappropriate conduct or comments caused a breakdown in further communication. Anne found that most of the comments she contributed to the discussion had to be made in a conversational manner and tone. She quickly realized that she had to work to sway them to her

viewpoint as it was extremely difficult to function if all of them were on the opposing side.

Discouraging any personal negative comments also required considerable tact. It was necessary at times to discourage the use of names to prevent hurt feelings. During a discussion on alcoholism one student used the name of a classmate's father as an example of an alcoholic. Discouraging this type of comment, although handled as tactfully as possible, resulted in the termination of the discussion and the lesson. This curtailment of the discussion created extra spare time at the end of the period and presented another challenge for the inexperienced teacher.

Teaching in an Unstimulating Environmental Setting

Anne felt that her work environment was rather unstimulating. She worked in a room with one ceiling light and she stated in no uncertain terms that "windowless rooms bug me." She felt that she and her students would probably feel better psychologically if they were not cut off from their natural surroundings in such a manner.

She also found the staffroom lacking and described it as an oversized closet with one long table down the centre. The fifteen chairs had soft, padded seats but were insufficient in number to accommodate the entire staff at one time.

She sensed that the Junior High students lacked school spirit with respect to keeping their environment neat. The hallways were often messy, with food strewn along the halls by the end of the day. Anne described the scene as repulsive and said that at times it bothered her and at other times it didn't.

Establishing Relationships

Anne expressed a lack of warmth with the superintendent. She also sensed and resented the fact that this administrator conveyed a competitive undertone by his comparison of a large and a small school.

She perceived the supervisor of special needs as someone who was genuinely attempting to be helpful and the principal as a jovial, goodnatured individual. This school, under his leadership, emanated a good familial staff spirit.

In general, Anne experienced a lack of opportunity to interact with her colleagues. She said it was impossible for her to meet with teachers as she had one 'prep' a week and it was at a different time from theirs.

Anne experienced little genuine, supportive help from her teacher aide. In fact Anne felt the service was "pretty pointless" as the aide couldn't hold her own with the Junior High students. So the aide's chief role was to read to resource students from experiencially deprived home environments.

Relationships with students were challenging in several respects. Ann worried about her students' progress. Were they progressing and learning? Most challenging was the task of building self-esteem in some of the Junior High students. Next was the instilling of motivation to achieve. Anne desperately wanted to have an impact on the attitude of her students.

She worried about some of their home situations. When she encouraged more cleanliness on the part of some of these seventeen-year-old students, she was frustrated by the lack of cooperation from home.

One lad was allowed to bathe but was told to wear the same shirt all week. Another boy was required to wear the same clothing for one week because his mother washed clothes once a month. The father carried the water required to do the laundry and refused to carry water more frequently.

Parent conferences were found to be an unusual communicative system. In this teacher's experience, she found that the communication was not a true conversation. She experienced two extremes: either she talked or the parent talked incessantly about their child. Some parents expected unrealistic analysis of their child's problems based on past experiences with which the teacher was unfamiliar. Some parents seemed mildly interested but they feared something was wrong when the teacher phoned. Anne telephoned several times to establish good public relations but found this system of communication very time consuming as some conversations continued for almost an hour.

Experiencing Rewards

The young teacher experienced no direct rewards from administrative staff. There was "no conscious effort to pat you on the back." No one came to compliment. However, Anne perceived the experience of rewards to be a personal factor. She felt indirectly complimented by a mother's comment that her son doesn't talk about quitting school any longer. The school librarian's comment that she noticed a real change in Anne's students was also encouraging. At this point, Anne prefered that "people stay out of it."

EXPERIENCES AS AN ESTABLISHED EDUCATOR

Experiencing Role Related Stress

For the veteran special education teachers the issues related to roles varied with the individuals. Margaret experienced incompatible requests from various administrators. She found that such requests were "not opposed but one wants one thing, the other another, there are different emphases."

Serving as a role model caused some concern for Margaret. She expressed her concern as follows, "I don't want to impose my values on another. Some students don't come from middle-class homes. I find in dealing with these students that their values are extremely different from mine. For example, lying is okay. I don't want to confuse the kid. It is very difficult to deal with what is foreign to me." Margaret also disliked the "backward attitude toward women demonstrated by some students. It's hard to be a role model when you are considered a second class citizen."

Lynn felt that the constant demand for role changes were simply "part of the job" and were little cause for concern. However, she did object to a lack of well-defined goals relating to things such as curriculum for special needs students. She felt that the curriculum set limits for the kids. "This is a TMH class -- these are the objectives." According to this teacher, there should be no curriculum goals. Objectives for each child should be very flexible and open to constant change.

Rosemarie, however, has experienced much discrepancy in role expectations and found it a great source of frustration. The supervisor

of special needs wanted the special education teacher to integrate fairly competent students into particular mainstream subject areas such as social studies and health. So at the beginning of the new term this teacher met with two regular classroom teachers and worked out a schedule whereby two or three students would be mainstreamed into a specific subject area. One of these teachers went to the principal and objected to this integration, so without consulting the special education teacher to inquire about the rationale of this program he simply terminated it and failed to inform the special educator concerned. This placed the special educator in a "no win" situation when she was evaluated by the departmental supervisor. The teacher was told that she should be a leader yet was given no authority or support to be one. Since there was no specific or written school policy regarding integration of special students into mainstream programs she could do nothing about integrating such students if the regular classroom teacher was uncooperative. Unfortunately, a minority of teachers are unethical enough to deny a special needs student the opportunity for exposure to mainstream instruction, so it is imperative that a special educator be backed by a supportive administrator or by a clearly defined policy. The purpose of special education is to upgrade a student's skills so he can function in the mainstream, not to deny a student the opportunity to function to the best of his ability. In her new assignment this year this special education teacher found her vice-principal most cooperative in this regard. In fact, he approached the teachers regarding the mainstreaming of students. It was a welcome change and very much appreciated by this teacher.

Experiencing Work Overload

Margaret objected to much of the paperwork, forms and surveys that were being demanded of special educators. She felt it was a fair expectation of administrators to request input from teachers but their requests for actual written policies were an unfair job allocation and she stated that was the "job of central office." She also stated the "paperwork was a drag" and she specifically referred to forms students must return such as the general questionnaires from central office.

Lynn exclaimed even more emphatically, "Oh god! checklists, a lot of useless forms really bugs the hell out of me. It's such a waste of time, paper -- and it puts limits on the kids." She also objected to the unrealistic demands and timelines for Individualized Education Plans. "I find it ridiculous! I can get it done! I just sit down and do it , but I find the timelines ridiculous -- having them done in two days when you don't know the kid at all." While Lynn did not feel she was overwhelmed by the demands of her workload she found she could not get all her work done during the day so she came "in on weekends. I usually spend all day Sunday at school to try to get ahead enough so that during the week I don't have too much at night to do --just a little bit. I found it very stressful at the beginning of the year but now I have my act together better and know what I'm doing a little better so it's not so bad now."

Rosemarie also experienced much frustration with government checklists. One September she filled out all the current checklists for EMH students, a job that required approximately four hours per student, only to be presented with new checklists the first week of October. No

government official or administrator had informed her that revised forms were forthcoming and of course they were not on time for the new school term. The many additional hours required to duplicate the work cut into actual planning time so essential at the beginning of a new term. There are only so many hours in a day and time spent on forms detracts from the actual preparation time for the students. "This 'paperwork blitz mania' is a trend that really worries me." More and more emphases is being placed on secretarial duties and legalities rather than the real purpose and essence of teaching - human contact with students. Teachers used to have time to just talk to the students on an informal basis. Now they are so overloaded with paperwork and formally organized clubs and activities that it is difficult for them to find time to simply talk to their students for ten minutes, or to fulfill human needs such as alunch break for fifteen minutes.

Margaret also expressed some apprehension relating to after-school in-service activities. There seem to be "more committees and more expectations; as a trend that worries me." The student relevant extra-curricular activities were a source of some stress for her. Activities such as fund-raising were viewed as "a pain in the neck, not really a source of great stress, but just another thing you have to do."

Lynn, stated that she enjoyed after school activities and meetings in principle but that she often felt too tired or drained at the end of the day to be able to concentrate and brainstorm ideas for better ways of teaching. On the other hand, she didn't mind fund-raising. In fact she enjoys it and felt it was good for the students to raise money for a purpose.

Rosemarie has mixed feelings about the costs and benefits. While fund-raising, such as the student operated Corner Store has some benefits in showing students how to run a small business, the headaches such as monetary accountability often are not completed in the few minutes allocated for the job, so the students and the supervising teacher for an off-balance day end up late for class time in the third period. She questions any extra-curricular activity which causes inefficient use of class time.

Being Responsible for Students

Margaret expressed much concern regarding the unrealistic expectations of others about what can be accomplished. At the Junior High level she found that she often did not have the desired impact on the students that she would have preferred. In her own words, "Yes, I want to do a lot for students but get depressed about home backgrounds and how it affects them. Ideally, I know what should be and what I have to face, and there is a discrepancy."

Lynn, who previously worked with TMH students felt that expectations were often below what these students were capable of achieving. People often failed to realize that these students can make as much progress as they do. She delighted in comments of consternation such as "they can't do that."

Rosemarie, who previously taught intermediate TMH and primary EMH students, found her experiences closely resembled those of Margaret. She worked very hard trying to get her students started academically only to experience constant frustration due to misplaced students. Some students with severe epilepsy constantly had their learning negated by

grand mal seizures. Other students with severe anatomical problems such as an enlarged tongue preventing articulate speech or a depressed skull causing severe sight problems were either unable to speak or to see to be able to communicate or to read. Yet obtaining parental cooperation to initiate medical help was most difficult, and the time wasted in unnecessary delays most frustrating. Rosemarie, like Margaret, found great discrepancy between what should be and what she had to face.

In addition, at the primary level, some parents either had not been fully informed by the psychologists and department supervisors or they had not fully accepted the limitations of a few of these handicapped children and their frustrations were at times vented upon the special education teacher. Minimal success causes much stress for the teacher concerned, especially if much effort has been expended only to be downgraded by less than understanding parents and administrators.

Lacking Locus of Control

Margaret expressed some frustration concerning lack of impact in decision making which directly concerns her work. She resented the time required in staff meetings until 6:00 p.m. to set up goals and guidelines only to find that they were never implemented or followed through by the administration. It was frustrating to find that these expectations and demands were simply more futile efforts and make-work sessions not considered seriously by administration.

Lynn expressed concern that East Wing students regardless of age were all in an elementary school wing. "That's unethical I think." She also disliked "where special education classes are usually located" and wished she had the opportunity to do something about it.

Rosemarie had also suggested to an administrator that a policy be written regarding the integration of deserving special needs students into appropriate mainstream classes to overcome lack of understanding or lack of cooperation. She also felt that the teachers should have a voice in placement decisions. Psychologists and administrators are knowledgeable people but teachers also have valuable insights concerning students' capabilities and work habits that should not be, but often are, overlooked.

Meeting High Demands of Pupil Load

Rosemarie found that the pupil load that could be handled varied with the teaching assignment. In a TMH class a pupil load of eight can be handled quite well since there is more emphasis on life skills. In addition, there is generally at least one teacher-aide on duty. Comparatively, in an EMH primary class a pupil load of twelve is difficult to handle since these children are beginning to develop skills and are at so many different levels. Grade three students generally, function about mid-grade one to early grade two level. They are ready to learn academically but the teacher often is unable to give them as much time as would be desirable because there are likely to be several students at the initial stages of reading skills development who need much assistance and direct teaching. In addition, another three or four students are likely to be at the playschool or kindergarten level and require activities that are more play oriented. These students often distract the older group who must concentrate on reading activities. However, at the Junior High level a group of fifteen grade nine academic occupations students can be handled quite efficiently. Since all of

these students are likely to have at least grade three skill level in the various subject areas, all are capable of working independently and the teacher can schedule group lessons and activities quite effectively.

Experiencing Job Satisfaction

Margaret's greatest source of stress this year is related to a job assignment outside her area of expertise. She stated, "I'm teaching drama. I want to make it interesting and fun for the kids yet keep them in control. They can't handle the unstructured environment."

Lynn felt she had been 'conned' into going to the junior high school. Since she had been offered no other option after a return from leave she had reluctantly agreed to the change. Now she was angry with herself because she had not pursued the possibility of another option. This involuntary transfer placed her in a teaching position for which she felt inadequately prepared. Furthermore, Lynn could not understand why administrators had placed her in the junior high. "Why did they put me in junior high? I never put foot in junior high. I don't know the material." As a result this teacher has found teachin very stressful. She applied for a number of jobs in the fall and asked herself several times when it would be best to quit -- Christmas? -- Easter? Now she has decided to finish the year as the July and August salary would really help her re-establish herself in another area of work for next year. She is hoping to obtain a position in early intervention, to be an exchange teacher in Japan, or even substitute teach for a large system such as Edmonton or Toronto so she can pursue her singing with the symphony groups. Lynn said that she has taught for only three years but that she already wants to get out of the classroom. She resigned

from teaching at the end of the school term with few regrets. Rosemarie took one year leave to get away from it all. It was not the students she found stressful but life stresses compounded by harrassment from some administrators. Rosemarie went through a very trying time in her personal life. Her father deteriorated slowly, underwent extensive surgery and chemotherapy. Her mother became very weak and nervous due to such prolonged stress. The aging mother, in this weak state, fell in her kitchen and broke her wrist and arm, thus incapacitating her further. Since neither parent was capable of functioning normally much responsibilty fell on the shoulders of the children. This was a difficult situation since all children lived more than three hundred miles away. Many eight hour trips on weekends and holidays soon taxed this teacher's energy. Despite frequent appeals and many hospital referrals for the mother's nervous condition the doctor kept releasing this elderly woman without the appropriate care she needed. After her father's funeral this teacher brought her ailing mother back with her and attempted to care for her. However, this was an impossible situation. On several occasions the ailing mother had to be rushed to emergency before the teacher could go to work. The elderly mother had had a nervous breakdown and her state of depression and requirements for care soon over-extended the daughter's physical resources to cope with the situation.

Although this teacher finally obtained alternative care for her ailing mother, the damage had already been done. An administrator misinterpreted the stress the teacher was undergoing as professional burnout, so when he evaluated her, he wrote a very scathing report. It

is frightening to think that a teacher cannot be human and hurt emotionally in times of personal crises without jeopardizing her professional life permanently. It seems that in times of teacher abundance some administrators are too eager to justify their positions and consequently may threaten a teacher's professional life with a damaging report alluding to perceived well-being based only on inaccurate, superficial impressions. This teacher cared about other human beings' problems and suffering, was empathic and gave of herself constantly. When she over extended her efforts she was written off as a victim of burnout when in actual fact she was simply worn out and in dire need of support. Had it not been for the insight and good listening capability of one very professional administrator in head office this teacher would very likely have been dismissed for lacking the qualities required in a caring profession.

Teaching in Unstimulating Environments

Margaret felt that the work environment had much to be desired. The teachers have no workroom and the duplication machine next to the coffee table is a poor solution. Since the staffroom is too small for the number of staff members, the addition of duplicating equipment to the counters simply compounds the problem. Anyone working at the counter blocks the pathway to the telephone and one aisle of a lunch table.

Margaret also has worked in a classroom that had been subdivided for special education purposes. She objected to the windowless classrooms and the "closed in feeling" as she felt it affected her psychologically. "In the winter I go from weekend to weekend without

seeing sun. In winter it's oppressive, stuffy, and poorly ventilated. Basically it's just depressing. There is also a safety factor with fire -- only one exit -- with a window you can smash it to escape." She also felt that for special needs students natural lighting rather than fluorescent was superior for cognitive achievement.

Lynn emphatically objected to various factors in her work environment. "I just can't stand the smoke in the staffroom - I just physically can't stand it." She was also fairly vocal with respect to the windowless classroom. I "hate it -- it feels like a cell -- after school and weekends I have to force myself to go back. Part of it is that my room is such a little cell. I hate it! I force myself, but when I get to it, I get to work and get it done." She complained that there was no room in her class to set things up. "I'm going to have them make volcanoes but where? There's just no room." She expressed further frustration with regulations controlling printing and lack of workroom facilities. She said it was "so ridiculous to be told not to use the ditto machine." She stated that she had "a lot of commercial materials that are dittoes and you can't photocopy them because they don't come through right so that is very annoying."

Rosemarie has the only special education classroom with windows so her room is more in tune with the environment. However, since it is part of the subdivided area, it lacks the spaciousness that would be desirable to accommodate the special equipment and the large desks for the six foot students who use the facilities.

With regard to resources, Margaret felt there were a fair number of resources and that the county and the media centre were fairly

supportive in that respect. However, there was an obvious "publishers lack of materials for the Junior High crowd." Many desirable materials for this age group simply were "not available."

Lynn found a lack of low vocabulary and high interest materials. For example, it was easier to make 'rubber ducky' activities for younger students for mathematics but you couldn't do that for teens even though they are functioning at the same level. "Trying to pick and pull from eight thousand different books gets to be rather trying. Getting things photocopied because you're using things from here and there" was considered a real chore. Rosemarie agreed that getting fragmented information from everywhere was a clerical nuisance.

The teachers agreed that the administrators are generally consistent about specified times for intercom announcements. Clerical help is provided by both a secretary in the workroom and occasionally by a teacher-aide. With their assistance and support the work generally gets done. If necessary they use the word processor to produce the tests or material required. However, the teachers expressed concern that government cuts would soon result in the loss of their teacher-aide and the clerical assistance she provided. This fear materialized and the position was deleted in early June.

Meeting Schedules and Experiencing Stress

Margaret now finds that she has enough time to prepare materials, to plan sufficiently, and to get most of her work done during the school day. As a first year teacher she had so much work every night. She recalls that there were "not enough hours in a day, let alone a school day." Despite the fact that she claims to get most of her work done

during the school day, the researcher has noted that Margaret is frequently in her classroom doing odd jobs on weekends, evenings and even during holidays such as Christmas break. In fact, the special education and physical education teachers are encountered the most frequently during off-hours.

Meeting timelines and deadlines is stressful for Margaret. It's "my personality, I'm late with everything. I need them but find it stressful to actually get down to work and get it done."

Margaret rated her anxiety relating to supervision schedules as very high. "Supervision, I find very stressful. There is not enough contact with the student body." Margaret also stated that she was at a disadvantage in supervision situations because she was a woman and short. She also found it "stressful when kids laugh behind you -- call you a bitch -- see you as the enemy instead of as a human being." Margaret viewed this type of student behavior as "adult centered antagonism." Student name calling such as "bitch" is indeed very inappropriate for a caring and dedicated teacher such as Margaret.

For Lynn, supervision was perceived as "incredibly boring" rather than stressful. Fortunately this young teacher is fairly tall and her physical size is a definite asset in highschool hallways.

Rosemarie, like Margaret has experienced deliberate, unprovoked hassles from certain students. She had a big fellow deliberately obstruct her pathway through the hall for no apparent reason other than the fact that she just happened to be there. She did not know the student, and furthermore, had never had any previous dealings with him. One day he simply made a point of blocking her way as she was passing

through an area near his classroom. When she looked up and said, "Excuse me," he replied "no," laughed, and only after a searing look from this teacher, finally stepped aside. As soon as this teacher had passed, comments were made behind her back and several students snickered. The teacher turned and firmly stated that she did not appreciate comments behind her back. As soon as she turned to leave the comments and snickering recurred. She had to reprimand him firmly before the nonsense stopped. As far as the researcher and the homeroom teacher could ascertain there was no basis for this incident other than simply 'stirring up a little action' for student amusement.

Experiencing Rewards and Stress

Margaret felt that there was a lack of opportunities for teachers. There was little opportunity for promotion if you were not inclined to seek an administrative position. "Once you're a teacher, always a teacher -- not a lot of consultancies. With the job market you can't have lateral change, you must wait five years or so. Change is important in teaching." In a similar vein, Lynn indicated there were administrative options. However, she conceded that opportunity for promotion was perhaps more of a problem in a community like this.

Margaret also sensed a lack of public appreciation for the work teachers do. She perceived a "lack of positive and a lot of negative feedback from the press and people in general. When people imply I don't earn what I get it causes me stress. I feel I do earn it."

Lynn felt that lack of public appreciation had not affected her personally. In fact, when she was teaching trainable handicapped students, some people said she was "marvelous, wonderful, must be an

angel." From her point of view , if people have the perception that teaching is a nine to three-thirty job, then that is their problem. All I can say is, "Fine, why aren't you a teacher?" The people I know realize that it is not a nine to three-thirty job.

In addition to lack of public appreciation, Margaret felt that social reward and opportunities for interaction with peers was sadly lacking in this community. "You must interact with teachers." Fortunately Marg felt that staff relations were very good and that we had a good social committee.

Rosemarie has lived in this community for twelve years and has raised her family in the area. Contrary to Margaret's experiences as a single woman, she has been exposed to relationships with peers from all walks of life. In fact, her closest friends include proportionately fewer teachers.

Inter-relationships as Sources of Stress

Communicating with Administrators

These teachers felt there was a definite lack of communication between the school and central office. The teachers felt a lack of participation in making decisions regarding goals and guidelines that affect their work. Despite their input, contributions, and extra-time devoted after school hours to staff meetings regarding policies, they found that these were never organized, consolidated, implemented, or followed through by the administrators.

Lynn felt there was "not very good communication between office and eastwing. It shouldn't be like that. We were ignored by the office." Also, lack of participation was cited as cause for concern. Teachers

were not included on interviews for hiring of teacher-aides. She objected to such practice since "we have to work with those people." She felt that such a practice required change.

For Margaret, disagreeing with a supervisor had not been a major problem. It was accepted and I "did what I did." Lynn simply stated, "If I disagree, I will tell them. If it gets me into trouble -- well, it's the only way I can live with myself."

Developing Policies

Lack of clearly defined school policies has not been a major problem for Margaret. She felt that the school policies were "defined as well as possible, that there was some "need for leeway." She felt that the major problem was that "as a new teacher" you "don't always know what policy is."

Lynn objected to a lack of proper placement for students with special needs. She felt that "a number of kids should have been in other classes, not in the East Wing" program for trainable mentally handicapped students. She also objected to the placement of teenagers in an elementary school wing rather than in the local highschool with more age appropriate peers.

Rosemarie had experienced problems integrating students into mainstream courses and felt there was a definite lack of clearly defined policies concerning integration of deserving students into regular courses. Since the purpose of special education is to upgrade a student's skills in the areas of weakness, it is unethical to deny that student instruction in the mainstream if his/ her skills approach grade level in specific areas. It is a fallacy to assume that if a student is

weak in one or two areas, he/she is functioning well below grade level in all areas. In order to safeguard a student's rights, and to clarify the rationale for integration of certain students into mainstream courses, a clearly defined educational policy is absolutely essential.

Experiencing Consultative Services

Margaret found administrative support fairly good. Although she had experienced "isolated cases of discipline" a problem, she felt that in general she received much help. Lack of consultative help had not presented much of a problem for Margaret. However, Lynn and the researcher both have experienced problems in this area. This is probably because they have worked in various job assignments exposing them to different work situations in which they had to learn varying expections pertaining to these jobs. It is fallicious for established administrators to assume that if a teacher has worked in the system before they should know 'the ropes.' Unfortunately, different job assignments may have less in common than people realize. Also, if a previous employee has been in a particular teaching assignment for several years, an administrator may become accustomed to this established employee's efficiency and may not realize that new personnel are unfamiliar with accepted routine or do not know what may appear obvious or common knowledge. Such assumptions of common knowledge may easily become a problem in times of constraint when little turnover of staff occurs. The administrators accustomed to established workers, may not recognize potential problem areas for new staff members.

Lynn stated that lack of consultative help has been a cause of stress for her. She found it extremely "hard at the beginning of the

year" so she kept telling herself, "but things will get better." She experienced a "lack of support system -- my personality changed -- it was hell." We need "support from people who know -- or relief support. Effective help is definitely lacking I think, so you don't think you're all by yourself."

Lynn found the situation at the beginning of this term so stressful that she was applying for jobs when she could in "a desperate attempt to get out."

Rosemarie has experienced a similar lack of support. In her first teaching assignment she received a TMH placement. Several of these students were severely handicapped, non verbal and physically disabled. There were no supervisors or special needs consultants in the system at that time and the principal was teaching full time. So this teacher struggled, unguided for the entire year. Finally, for the following term, guidance was obtained from Dr. Kysela and two of his assistants. The systematic direction for educating these severely disabled students relieved much of the stress experienced by the educator.

Experiencing Program Evaluation

When Margaret was asked if she found program evaluation stressful she stated, "Program, no; teacher, yes." Lynn agreed and simply replied, "No problem." The teachers all agreed that program evaluation was little cause for much concern and was not a source of grave professional stress.

Experiencing Staff Evaluation

Marg found staff evaluation very "stressful, especially with that new evaluation form which is about twenty pages long. Only

approximately two pages is devoted to actual teaching style and abilities." The bulk of the form deals "with participation, in-service, professional development, extra-curricular activities, and also the personality of the individual."

Lynn objected to evaluation proedures because they come "in for one short time and base evaluation on circumstances in a narrow perspective -- things are written down that aren't true." They "don't ask but make written comments." Administrators should "ask why you are doing it that way and allow me to account for myself." Lynn had no qualms about the issue of accountability. She felt we "should be accountable" but also that we "have a reason for why we're doing things" so we should be given the opportunity to express these reasons and explain our viewpoints.

Establishing Relationships with Colleagues

Communication among staff is sometimes perceived to be a problem. Margaret noted that with extra-curricular activities "you often don't know ahead" what will occur. For example, there may be a large band trip organized for the students and other teachers affected by student band trips may not be informed well in advance. Often relevant information is passed along through student council. Also, with remediation, there may be a test but "students don't go or don't show." Lynn agreed that "with remedial there is some lack of communication."

Providing help to colleagues apparently was enjoyable for all the teachers. Margaret indicated that she enjoyed this type of activity as she liked to share.

Working with volunteers or aides presented no problem for Margaret. She likes having another adult in the classroom. She says it "keeps me sane."

Lynn had experienced some teacher-aide problems and said, "I had to write a letter re: aides, I was glad I did it. I could live with myself anyway."

Rosemarie has taught for more years than her colleagues and has worked with numerous aides. Some were excellent workers who provided invaluable assistance, emotional support and also became good friends while others were another person to account for and more nuisance than help. It depends so much on the individual's skills, interests, and desire to serve. Most genuinely enjoyed their work as teacher-aides while two or three seemed only interested in putting in time and had no goals or future plans.

All the teachers valued their colleagues as supportive professionals and personal friends. However, Margaret noted that her colleagues tended to "sit at a certain table because of personality."

Students

Dealing with individual differences, teaching, and evaluating students was perceived by the educators as the main focus of their work. These activities were not viewed as areas of major concern or sources of stress contributing to professional burnout. Student related involvements such as management of extra-curricular activities and field trips were assessed as stressful but enjoyable. Margaret stated that extra-curricular work causes her some stress and she views field trips

as "highly stressful, but enjoyable. I burned up many calories worrying at Expo for five days, but it was one of the best teaching experiences I had, one of the best times I had with my kids." Lynn agreed saying that she liked it and that she would "far rather do that than staff meeting policy etc. -- rather work with the kids."

Helping students with personal problems causes Margaret some stress "especially when the counsellor's gone and I have an hysterical girl on my hands, with no place to deal with it." She found use of the hallway with "the rest of the class berzerk inside" a very unsatisfactory and stressful counselling situation. She also finds parental abuse and similar problems a cause for considerable concern.

Unmotivated students were a source of additional concern and stress for the teachers. Margaret stated, "I feel I'm evaluated for my ability to motivate. When I only deal with him only twenty five percent of the day -- I think that is hardly fair. Lack of motivation is a sign of society. The work ethic is dead, people are trying to get something for nothing."

Lynn definitely felt that unmotivated students were a source of much teacher stress. "When I try everything just to get them going and nothing motivates them then I lose my motivation to even try to make it work. They are just so turned off on school." In her experiences as a teacher she had found it much easier to get younger children motivated because they show through their actions that they were enthusiastic about a proposed activity or event.

Disruptive students and verbal abuse by students are also a cause for considerable stress for two of the teachers. Margaret found it

stressful as it is "directed at me personally, disturbs other students learning, and is a sign of society" as they exhibit "lack of respect for others." We expect "model students, but some students come from homes where you must re-socialize them." Personality conflicts with students are also stressful. This teacher lamented, "As a human being, when I try to do my best to be firm, fair, consistent and they don't, it's upsetting."

Lynn stated that disruptive students were a cause for concern because she was rather overwhelmed and frustrated when she found herself in a situation where she felt she was losing control. Regarding verbal abuse from students she said that her greatest problem was knowing how to act or re-act. "I have a hard time knowing how to act. I don't know what to say or how to act."

Other concerns such as student absenteeism, are also stress inducing "because it indicates a lot of parent neglect." Similarly, student vandalism, theft or damage to personal property is bothersome. I like to think I can trust my students and it bothers me when I find out I can't trust someone."

Lynn hadn't noticed too much vandalism. However, with regard to theft and damage to personal property she indicated that items had been missing, but after talking to the students some things showed up. She thought that maintenance of closer tabs regarding lending policies, locked classroom doors and so forth would be helpful.

Accommodating Parents

Parent-teacher interviews were not as source of major concern for Margaret unless there were discipline problems and the parents blindly

viewed the undisciplined child as a "golden-haired boy." Generally teachers like to set up a parent-teacher interview situation that emanates good will and effective rapport. Lack of parental support is viewed as sad rather than stressful since such parents "don't have high expectations." The teachers definitely felt badly for the student who had little parental support but didn't know what they could do. They conceded that it is difficult to intervene and change the family framework after so many years.

Both Lynn and Rosemarie felt that parent interviews and conferences were not generally a source of stress but these teachers admitted that they each had run into a very difficult situation with one set of parents in their teaching careers and that these situations were a source of great stress and concern at the time.

CHAPTER 7

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

INTEGRATIVE OVERVIEW

For ease of reader recall, the two-fold investigative approach is restated. Both the quantitative and the qualitative research strategies are utilized in the study. In the final chapter, the researcher presents the quantitative discussion of results and the summary. This is followed by the qualitative discussion and reflections. The implications and recommendations for future research and intervention are integrated to conclude the study.

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

It is emphasized that the focus of the present study was two-fold in the investigative approach undertaken and that the major emphasis was not on stress and burnout per se but on stress contributing to burnout and its relationship to the teaching assignment of professionals in the educational field. The possible stress syndrome constitutes a complex area of study. Consequently, the chief purpose of this study was to provide some useful information regarding stress related to the teaching assignment.

The results of the study reported in the foregoing chapters are not, therefore, informational about a specific syndrome or syndromes. The study is an attempt to highlight via a comparative research the differences in the levels of stress experienced by teachers across several psychological dimensions. In order to determine possible significant differences related to teaching assignment these parameters

were also monitored. By identifying differences between various groups of teachers, the first step has been taken toward illuminating work-induced stress experienced by teachers displaying what may be described as 'real' stress contributing to burnout.

In retrospect, the study was operationalized by comparing, on the MBI - Maslach Burnout Inventory, three groups of teachers in various teaching assignments. The three groups respectively consisted of forty-three mainstream teachers, ten resource room teachers, and eighteen self-contained special education teachers. The results of the comparisons across the three teacher assignments, depicted by tables in Chapter 5, are discussed. Information about levels of stress across the three treatment groups is also indicated. In addition, suggestions and implications for intervention, indicated by the findings of the study, are discussed.

Discussion of Results

It was hypothesized that the self-contained special education teachers would be distinguishable from their colleagues in the mainstream regular classroom and resource room teaching assignments in the levels of stress reported. It was found that the mean level of stress reported by the special education teachers was, in fact, significantly different from the means obtained from resource room teachers on two of the six of the variables tested. These results indicate that various teaching assignments do, to some extent, differentiate the groups of teachers.

At the core of the research were hypotheses regarding what would be found with respect to the levels of stress experienced by special

education teachers. It was hypothesized that they would report higher levels of stress than their colleagues in mainstream and resource room teaching assignments. The results are enlightening. The special education teachers were found to be similar to the mainstream teachers, but dissimilar to their resource room colleagues in experiencing more frequent depersonalization. Furthermore, it was hypothesized that teachers categorized as self-contained special education teachers would experience greater levels of emotional exhaustion related to their work than the other two teacher groups. The special education teachers did indeed report that they were dissimilar to the resource room teachers but similar to mainstream teachers in experiencing a higher frequency of emotional exhaustion related to their teaching assignment. These findings are not compatible with the results of such studies as Cherkes and Fimian (1982), where stress was reported to be a factor contributing to special educator burnout. Their findings were that special education teachers experience stronger Emotional and Fatigue Manifestation than mainstream teachers who teach either nonhandicapped or both handicapped and nonhandicapped students. Findings implicating stress such as the present results do support the contention that stress and burnout is a reality with special education teachers. Regardless of the source or cause, the emotional exhaustion that contributes to poor teaching performance and physical illness does exist in this specialized field.

Summary

The results indicate that various manifestations of stress produce varying results. Frequency of both depersonalization and emotional exhaustion appear to be particularly important in distinguishing special

education teachers from their colleagues in resource room education. With stress assessment of educators in various teaching assignments, the major contention of this study is partially affirmed. Both mainstream and special educators do report experiencing a higher frequency of depersonalization and emotional exhaustion on two of the six categories considered by Maslach and Jackson as major factors indicative of stress. The results do support the contention that stress is related to exhaustion, "the key distinguishing factor of burnout" (Ray, 1985, p. 5).

QUALITATIVE SUMMARY AND REFLECTIONS

The researcher pondered over the experiences and stresses encountered by beginning special education teachers. What was it really like? What stresses did they experience as a result of all new governmental demands for special educators? What were the underlying stressors that caused such a high rate of turnover? The study was designed to focus on the stresses experienced by both beginning and experienced special education teachers to determine if some of these stresses experienced were similar to those suggested by the research literature.

In order to uncover the meaning of these teachers' experiences, it was imperative that the researcher would not only objectively observe, but would also delve below the surface to search for the deeper underlying meaning of experiences and interpretations. Research methods included observation, intensive interviews and field notes to obtain data and accurately depict the stresses encountered by these teachers in their real life situations. To gain an understanding of these teacher's

experiences the researcher visited their classrooms, maintained contact by telephone, and conducted interviews. As communication continued, the researcher described, portrayed, and interpreted these related experiences. With additional probing, certain emotional feelings and experiences emerged. As these emerged, the researcher was not only observing and recording but also questioning, discussing, clarifying, probing, exploring and interpreting certain themes. Certain themes became significant for both teachers. The researcher hoped these related experiences would reveal the reality of the experiences and stresses perceived by the special educators.

Chapter six is a description of the experiences reported by these special educators. The researcher attempted to understand and interpret these experiences as expressed and related to her. The themes evolved and the researcher continually described, explored and probed the special education specialists' experiences, and searched for the underlying meaning of these lived experiences.

Reflections on the Study

Topic

The topic of teacher stress and burnout has become a phenomenon of great importance. Were the stresses of specialized teaching experienced by one special education teacher similar to those of other special educators? If this were so, how were these demands and stresses perceived and handled by neophytes to the special education field?

Although the study was initiated with considerable interest and enthusiasm, the volume of material and data amassed was astounding. The task of sorting out the comments and perceptions of the teachers proved

to be challenging. It was difficult to isolate and interpret the themes underlying the meaning of these experiences and stresses.

Investigative Strategy

The beginning teacher struggled with so many initial demands that she almost became an island unto herself with little awareness of the time factor. She agonized over her plight, "Diagnosis, and then what?" Lack of direction and guidance produced very high stress levels in the beginning teacher.

For all special education teachers the searching and adaptation of a wide array of materials for special education students placed great demands on their planning time and organizational skills. Endless demands for individualized diagnosis and program development, in addition to daily lesson plans, unit plans, and materials made for learning centers contributed highly to these specialized professionals' stress levels. These teachers worried about 'getting it all together' and experienced considerable frustration with the over-emphasis on mounds of paperwork.

Meeting the individual needs of students and developing classroom management skills demanded further personal skill development. The ability to meet these needs, to provide positive reinforcement and guidance were more difficult for a teacher placed in an unstimulating environment.

Relationships with administrative personnel indicated teachers' lack of warmth with central office administrators. It seemed important that they should receive the support of other teachers, yet they had little time to interact because of schedules and the demands on their

time for preparing lessons to ensure daily survival. Relationships with students and parents seemed to require much tact and effort on their part to prevent communication break down or arousals of fear that an attempt to communicate indicated a problem. Yet it appeared that the only encouragements or rewards teachers received were from indirect comments. It seemed that the administrators and fellow teachers were reticent or incapable of giving the positive feedback that would have provided some incentive and encouragement for these specialists in this demanding field.

Furthermore, it seems that the supportive help that special education teachers need is often lacking from the perceptive of guidance and reassurance. Established colleagues are often wary or take for granted the beginner's skills of planning, individualizing, directing and orienting toward goals, managing time, developing good relationships, and in general 'getting it all together.'

Enlightenment and understanding of these experiences and stresses could promote development of supportive strategies and improved relationships with their administrators and colleagues. Effective assistance to reduce some of these stresses experienced by special educators could lay the basis for more successful future professional development.

Although many of the phenomena of beginning teaching experiences include personal development characteristics of major-life change, and a complex of interacting factors such as establishing independence, identity crisis and threat to the ego; it must be recognized as the base for future professional growth. The beginning special education teacher

experienced great anxiety because she felt inadequate in managing, planning, and organizing. These early experiences are sure to influence the teacher's perceptions and teaching styles.

While some minor attempts such as induction programs and internships attempt to address the problem, these have major deficiencies. Perhaps what is needed is an on site support program to provide the assistance and guidance during the transitional period from student to teacher. Until a more effective support system is developed to assist young special educators during this highly stressful transition, beginning teachers will continue to experience the many stresses which contribute to ultimate attrition and burnout.

Furthermore, if special education is to retain a working professional complement, the stress factors must be recognized. Attempts must be initiated to identify early symptoms of excessive stress contributing to later burnout. Strategies already exist to assist in treatment and intervention. By identifying the factors contributing to stress symptoms, depletion of our valuable professional resources, experienced teachers, may be averted.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The objectives of this study were concerned with the stress and burnout of special education teachers. In the study there were three types of placements: (1) mainstream teachers in charge of delivering regular educational programs; (2) resource room teachers responsible for short term remediation programs; and (3) self-contained special education teachers responsible for remediation of full-time placement students with various learning handicaps such as learning disabilities,

sensory impairments, emotional/behavioral problems, and mental handicaps. Twenty-eight teachers fell into the last two types of teaching assignments. As expected, the majority of teachers worked in mainstream educational programs.

The information collected in this investigation suggests that the subjects who experience the highest levels of stress intensity are special education teachers responsible for implementaton of various individualized educational programs for students displaying an array of learning problems. Comparison studies remain to be undertaken within the educational profession to determine whether differing levels of burnout exist within sub-disciplines of the teaching profession. It is suggested that this research be replicated among teachers of other systems which have greater and more varied populations of specialist teachers to support these findings. With further use of a human services survey such as the Maslach Burnout Inventory within the education profession, similar studies could provide additional data to be analyzed for similarities and differences.

Further study related to these results is recommended to determine exactly what it is about special education that contributes to teacher stress and burnout. By analyzing the interaction between personal and professional needs of special educators the underlying stresses or stressors could be identified. In addition, possible effects of such stressors on students, colleagues, or 'significant others' could be studied.

IMPLICATIONS FOR INTERVENTION

Perceived stress contributing to teacher burnout is a phenomenon of great concern for the educational profession. This research was undertaken to examine the effects of stress on special education teachers. The findings indicate that stress needs to be alleviated. Based on the results of this study a number of suggestions are included. Since most stress intervention programs seem to be directed at symptoms rather than at the underlying causes, two sets of recommendations are listed to conclude this investigation. The first deals with the teacher in the instructional assignment, while the second focuses on suggestions for administrators.

Stress-reduction Interventions for Teachers

1) Examine your values and avoid compromise.
2) Seek assertiveness training.
3) Set flexible and realistic goals and standards.
4) Avoid guilt feelings if you have not lived up to your perception of the perfect teacher.
5) Leave your teaching at school.
6) Develop your personal interests.
7) Pursue studies or travel.
8) Get adequate rest and exercise.
9) Periodically request a change in teaching assignment.
10) Take a sabbatical or leave of absence.

Stress-reduction Intervention for Administrators

1) Emphasize a team approach as opposed to superordinate- subordinate interaction.

2) Establish co-operation rather than competition and confrontation.

3) Provide meaningful supervision and direction for the inexperienced teacher.

4) Honour the established teacher's request for a change in teaching assignment.

5) Provide regular and effective consultative services when requested.

6) Apply problem-solving techniques, brainstorm and select alternatives, then provide appropriate feedback and evaluation.

7) Help teachers define reasonable objectives and provide them with autonomy to achieve these objectives.

8) Examine role expectations and eliminate incongruities.

9) Communicate effectively and positively.

10) Express respect for the opinion, feelings, and needs of others.

11) Keep confidences and promises.

It has been noted in this study that special education teachers experience considerable stress. The frequency and intensity of stress is related to the teaching assignment. As a consequence, teacher-relevant intervention programs must be developed and implemented to alleviate this professional work-related stress.

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Appendix A

Demographic Questionnaire

These answer sheets will be computer analysed. So PLEASE:

1. Use HB pencil
2. Erase carefully if required but DO NOT use liquid paper.
3. Use column for SEX (M) (F)
4. Do not print your name - to preserve your anonymity.
5. Use column K to indicate your age group:

20 - 29	1
30 - 39	2
40 +	3

6. Use column L to state your teaching assignment:

Regular class	1
Resource room	2
Self contained	3

7. Use column M to indicate the number of years in this teaching assignment:

1 - 3	1
4 - 9	2
10 - 15	3
16 +	4

8. Use column N to indicate the total years of teaching experience:

1 - 3	1
4 - 9	2
10 - 15	3
16 +	4

9. Use column O to show the % of teaching time in this position:

50% or less	1
More than 50%	2

10. DO NOT BEND the answer sheet but place in a large envelope provided and seal before handing it to the colleague collecting the data.

Appendix B

Maslach Burnout Inventory

Human Services Survey

The Human Services Survey has been removed due to unavailability of copyright permission. The purpose of this survey is to discover how different people in human services occupations view their work and the individuals with whom they must work closely. The survey contains twenty two questions in the form of a Likert scale and measures three factors related to burnout including: Emotional Exhaustion, Depersonalization and Personal Accomplishment.

This Human Services Survey, developed by Christina Maslach and Susan E. Jackson, is published by the Consulting Psychologists Press, Incorporated.